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President Hyde and the American College

I. *Collegiate Magnanimity*

G. R. Elliott

IN ENGLAND in the late Middle Ages, the college and the university grew up in close contiguity, each fostering the other while zealously maintaining its own function. In America that fruitful association could not be reproduced. First came the college, painfully working the provincial soil for two hundred years. Then, under sudden and crude conditions of fertility, the university rose like a mushroom, in some respects like a toadstool. Our colleges, while modelled on those of Oxford and Cambridge, could not cluster at two great national centres or provide university training for their advanced students. They were scattered and intellectually limited like the young States they served. About the middle of the nineteenth century they had become awkwardly aware of their own provinciality. Presently a number of them, stirred by the quick growth of natural science in Europe and of wealth and population in America, began to transform themselves all too recklessly into universities. Thus the American university received in embryo that stamp of *nouveau riche* which it exhibits now, and so vividly, in its youth (only a hopeless cynic would say, in its manhood). And thus the American college, instead of being long and wisely stimulated, has been quickly and vulgarly overshadowed, by the university. The college in relation to the university in these United States recalls the little bird besung by the Fool as emblematic of King Lear in relation to his daughters:

The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long
That it had it(s) head bit off by it(s) young.

That sparrow, however, appears to have had a mental apparatus hardly worth retaining. Not so Lear himself, at least in the Fool's opinion. Not so the American college, in the opinion of a good many educators who are no fools and who have recently been expressing themselves strongly on this subject. The college has a head worth saving. Its characteristic outlook is badly needed in the very land in which it has been so badly impaired. For the past fifty years the college in America has brooded far too meekly on university eggs. It has been abashed and dictated to, though not officially deposed, by its overweening daughters. The American university, a thing of swift and enormous growth like the towns in which it is usually situated, is the offspring of the struggling little college of a century ago, and nominally it has retained and nourished its kind mother within its precincts. Actually its treatment of her has been—well, generously matricidal. It has fattened her, with cannibalistic motives. It has progressively extended her body and dispelled her soul.

This process has now reached its culminating stage. It has gone on in recent years with such acceleration and such glamour that its real nature has not yet appeared to the public. They have seen the wonderful expansion of the university, not the fateful decline of the proper function of the college, though this comes closer to their vital interests. On the other hand, and very significantly, a number of scholars and educators not primarily interested in the college have become alarmed for the university. One of these is Professor Robert Shafer. In his vigorous articles in *The Bookman* two years ago* he has shown how the university, while blindly expanding in quantity, has narrowed and weakened her human quality by undermining her own foundation, the college. He hopes for the revival and reconstitution of the college within, rather than outside, the university walls. Here one may recall the old legends of the corpse that would freely bleed, but not come really alive again, in the presence of its murderer. May the omen perish! May the university-college experience a quick and joyful resurrection! But her strategic position just now seems less favourable than that of the independent college—the small and privately endowed institution, usually situated in a village or small town, and not connected with any university. It is often called "the small college"—rather tautologically, since the college is by nature small. The independent college, as well as the university-college, has been heavily affected by notions and methods that are proper only to the university. And in the work of casting these off, she is hampered by a certain provincial tenacity and slowness of movement.

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* May, June, July, 1931.

Perhaps before she succeeds in recovering her true self, her sister in the university may rise agilely from her bier. One would like to see a friendly competition between them on behalf of the collegiate idea. But the main outlines of that idea, at the present moment, are more clearly discernible in the independent college.

It was to this type of institution that William DeWitt Hyde devoted his life. He was president of Bowdoin College from 1885 until his death in 1917. The view of him here given is based, partly on personal knowledge of him in the last four years of his life, largely on the biography of him by Professor Burnett, his colleague and friend for thirteen years*. Mr. Burnett points out that early in his career Hyde expressed the sincere conviction that "the peculiar function of the college is likely to be performed better in isolation from the universities", and that "not the country college but its university counterpart has most to fear from the growth of the universities". Some may dismiss this prophecy as a piece of special pleading. Some may regard it as a true reading of modern conditions in American education. In any case, Hyde was undoubtedly one of the few great collegians who have so far appeared in America, within or without the university walls. And he deeply affected the destiny of the American college—largely for good but not altogether so—during its period of expansion under the influence of the new universities.

Gifted as administrator, teacher, writer, preacher, and public speaker, Hyde might easily have occupied positions far more striking to the American public eye than that of head of a "country college", as he called it affectionately. His beginnings in the ministry in Massachusetts, New York, and New Jersey had appeared to promise him high advancement in the Protestant church. But when the headship of Bowdoin was offered him at the age of twenty-seven, through the extraordinary efforts of a single admirer on the board of trustees, he accepted with full conviction. Nor subsequently could he be lured from his post by opportunities in public life or by offers of university presidencies in the growing West. The fact is, he was a born collegian. He gave to the college, and achieved for himself within the college, a rare fullness of life. "It is probable", says Mr. Burnett in his preface, "that all my efforts will not produce in most readers the creative sweep of imagination necessary to comprehend the sting and excitement, the risk and romance, and the persistent valour packed into the fifty-nine years of conspicuously academic life here recounted. . . . Hyde made no parade of his inner life. The cult of self-control permits no joyful shouts nor woeful cries, and he was a master in that cult." Certainly the biographer's task was a hard one, but he has performed it well. Some passages in his book are too local in their interest for readers outside the Bowdoin circle. Sometimes, on the other hand, Hyde's personality is not rendered with the direct intimacy of insight that the case demands. This is partly due to the author's modesty, which is very real and refreshing, and to his efforts at an entirely unbiased presentation. He is not sufficiently critical, I think, of Hyde's way of "liberalizing" the college curriculum—a serious matter, to be dealt with later on. But he gives us continual hints of the President's limitations in other respects, while weaving together with lively sympathy the inner and outer threads of a career in which ideas came out into conduct with singular purity. He has built a fair memorial to one who showed how large life could be in a small college, and how interesting the pursuit of high quality could be in a land whose higher education, even, is drugged with the lust of quantity.

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* HYDE OF BOWDOIN *by Charles T. Burnett with an Introduction by George Herbert Palmer* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. 1931)

The hard but not inglorious task of the college in America is to fight false magnitude, in all its alluring guises, and to build up a real magnanimity. Here the example of Hyde, for the most part, is a tower of strength. His work in moral philosophy, finely summed up by Mr. Burnett, has the large simplicity of spirit that ought to characterize the college. "What Hyde had learned from the masters he passed on with a new persuasiveness to his contemporaries." In one respect, the contemporaries were too much for the masters. Hyde's writings have a strain of too fluent optimism belonging to the pre-War age—begotten by the American gospel of social service from the German philosophy of absolute idealism. But these two phenomena did not affect him deeply. They were countered by his sense of humour and his shrewd moral insight. Hegel and Harvard Hegelianism (he was a Harvard graduate) did him no real harm. Always suspicious of metaphysical theories, he wore "the Absolute" in his buttonhole while applying his hand to what he called "*practical* idealism". As for the current ideal of "service", he tried to draw it into the service of the good life, the service of God. He was warmly interested in social institutions but, as Mr. Burnett says, he never found in them a "substitute for self-control". He opposed Prohibition. In woman suffrage he saw the working of a false democratic ideal—"a stupid equality with interchange of imitated functions". Against the grain of the times he preached: "Sin is the most universal, the most stubborn, the most cruel, the most ineradicable element in human nature. . . . When a man or church or generation loses the sense of sin, it is a sure sign of the loss of the vision of God." Such facts he had learned from his own strivings, in deep humility, towards moral perfection. And he had learned them at the same time from the great masters of religion and morals. He was speaking from personal experience when, a few months before his death, he urged Yale students to face the problem of life "not in conceited and futile independence but in all the light the masters of reflection can lend". In an age increasingly devoted to cheap freedom and originality, he showed the kind of freedom that may be won from an original study of ethical masterpieces.

"Personality", he says in a passage interpreting Aristotle, "is not an entity we carry around in our spiritual pockets: it is an energy no whit larger or smaller than the ends it aims at and the work it does." This strict axiom, finely blended with Christian charity, governed his work as administrator. His emphasis was first of all on personality. The college as distinguished from other institutions of learning was for him a personal organism, not an organization. When he announced to the students in regard to their conduct, "At Bowdoin there are no rules until you break them", this was not just a picturesque attitude. It was a sober and characteristic principle of the college. It was designed for the moral education of a small, intimate, and select society. And Hyde showed that in the right hands it could work successfully. At first his attitude met with misunderstanding and opposition, nor was his practice free from errors. But as the years went on he was able to demonstrate that the outer morality of the college could be sufficiently preserved, and its inner morality steadily advanced, with the minimum of formal rules and penalties and the maximum of personal pressures. These were exerted through casual interviews with undergraduates. The weak were advised without being threatened, except in desperate cases, and the strong were commended, and encouraged to help the weak.

Hyde's concern was for persons, not for procedures. He had no official air, no symptom of the disease that a wit has called "presidentitis", not even those occasional touches of laboured geniality that show that one is not entirely immune. His geniality like his dignity was wholly native. To others, though not to himself, he appeared to be so much larger than his office that in him the official was entirely submerged in the man. He walked the campus with head erect, springy gait, and eager eyes, not as boss of the college but as one who was proud and glad to be a member of it. He comported himself towards the youngest and greenest members of his Faculty as colleague and counsellor, and as one who was always anxious to learn something from them for the good of the college. And he made the college lovely in their eyes. He wanted them to serve the college, not him. The result was that they served him even more than the college, and often they overworked themselves in this double cause. A certain young instructor, fresh from a university where he had been bossed by pedants, waited on Hyde for commands, and showed embarrassment when all he got was questions, directed as from an interested novice to an expert. "We hope", said Hyde laughing, "that you will do your best in your own best way, so that we shan't have to 'fire' you." He gently compelled one to be free.

There was no cry on the Bowdoin campus for academic freedom. Hyde provided more of it than the college knew how to use, in the hope that the college would learn to use it better. "Autocracy tempered by assassination", he once wrote in his jocular vein, "is the ideal college government." But his own autocracy was unofficial. It consisted of personal superiority combined with unfailing modesty. Listening carefully to every opinion, he wanted his own to prevail only (with a very few exceptions) when he could thoroughly persuade the college that it was the best. And when his position was well established, he deliberately opened himself to "assassination". He instituted an annual private meeting of instructors with representatives of the trustees, so that grievances could be aired and opinions exchanged behind his back. This bold stroke cut the taproot of administrative autocracy, the president's secrecy of access to the financial masters of the college. Of course Hyde had secrets as a great man must, but as a skilful administrator he appeared to have none. In all matters of academic policy he made the Faculty free and supreme, or made them feel so, acting merely as their chairman and introducing his own views with casual modesty. He would endure any setback of his cherished plans rather than show the cloven hoof of the official ruler. For the plan he cherished most was that of the college as a beloved community, wherein each member, student or teacher, should have the maximum of freedom and of personal responsibility.

But he saw the danger of such a community. It might easily become an association for the mutual protection of petty personal outlooks, a hotbed of picayune activity and important indolence. He wanted it to be a little image of a mighty world--the world of universal ideas. Hence his associates, who for the most part had to be younger or lesser men than he, felt in him often a puzzling aloofness. They had a curious feeling that he was much more interested in them than in being with them. Callers found that his small talk, though wittier than theirs while it lasted, was far less extensive. The sharp concision of his anecdotes stood out in dismaying contrast with that elaboration of leisurely detail encouraged in rural New England. The talk, if confined to personalities, would soon begin to wane. The look of detachment in the President's eye would deepen. One evening he was asked by an uneasy visitor whether he liked to write in the evenings. "Oh no," was the mild but distant reply, "I only turn over in my mind the ideas I'm going to write about next morning." He would not obtrude his ideas in conversation nor open them to a merely conventional questioner. But if one could show a real interest in them, the President's eye would brighten and the talk would take on fresh ardour. Any notion, indeed, that anyone held with real conviction would excite his interest.

For sheer intellectual sword-play, on the other hand, he had little sympathy, too little. He could throw himself heartily into many sports, from golf to banter, but not into that which delighted Doctor Johnson, the sport of "talking for victory". Johnson, too, was an earnest Christian but his conscience was not made in New England. Hyde's mind, when not completely relaxed, was morally on the job. His appreciation of art was slight unless it obviously illustrated morals. His mind was not at home in the recreative middle ground between jest and earnest. That region, which may become a protectorate of Truth if traversed by excellent minds, ought not to be abandoned to the merely smart. Here was a defect in Hyde from the standpoint of the college. But the compensation was ample. His everyday demeanour, if one came to understand it—his lively if somewhat impersonal interest in persons, his air of reserve that was never dreamy or self-centred, his vital detachment, so to call it—conveyed the sense that the little world of the college was penetrated, for him, by the unseen world of great ideas and principles.

His effort to insinuate fresh ideas into a small college without shocking its nervous system involved a good deal of gentle indirection. And this method of procedure could be misleading when, as occasionally happened, he cherished a partial view or misjudged a person. The difficulty, which might have been ventilated by heated declarations, duly repented of later on, was obscured by a blend of politic and Christian politeness on the part of Hyde. But in the main he was right. He knew that in the realm of the college, revolutionary attitudes and personal hostilities do not merely cause trouble: they cause inanition. They make the college ridiculous, not just by disturbing her politeness, but by sapping her proper strength. They breed small-mindedness in an institution whose function is the enlargement of mind. Hence collegiate policies that are large in theory are not so in reality unless they comprise the spirit of patience and persuasiveness that belongs to magnanimity. And if Hyde's conduct could seem at times "an ungodly mixture", as one critic termed it, of idealism and tactics, it was on the whole a blessed union of principles and persuasion. He persuaded the college toward magnanimity.

In public he could utter sharp words arousing storms of resentment—as when he declared that an intellectual softening in Protestant seminaries was responsible for "the dreary drivelling of rant and cant that invades the pulpit like a flood"; or when he assailed the example of a well known college graduate who had made money by dishonest means and secured the tolerance of other alumni by pleasant generosities. But in private, among his colleagues, he set aside his gift of satiric epigram and subdued his warmth of temper. His serenity cost him much effort, which he well concealed, though in his last years his face would sometimes flush with a quick, silent struggle for charitable words. Self-critical as he was and thoroughly conversant with the academic nature, he would not try to reduce a colleague's egoism by anything that looked like direct assault. He came around it with telling questions and looked into it with unforgettable glances. One caught the gleam of his spectacles as the foursquare, bearded face—beard parted neatly in the middle—took a slight tilt to one side, quizzically. And then one met, for a moment, the austere meekness of the eyes. The look might say: "You're quite a person, doubtless, in your own way, but you and I have to remember that personality is no whit larger than the ends it aims at and the work it does."

He persuaded the Faculty to allow him to engage occasional speakers from other institutions. This policy is now quite general, but it needs to be carried out far more fully and systematically in our independent colleges, where the indigenous professor is apt to suffer sadly—or flourish gladly—for lack of effective comparisons. However, Hyde's main corrective for collegiate littleness was his own example as a scholar. He stemmed the rising tendency of the American college president to become a mere executive, an edition in duodecimo of the new-university president. He saw that this tendency was a fateful contravention of the distinctive nature of the college. As a closely knit personal organism in which the force of example was at the maximum, how well could it grow intellectually if its leader should exemplify an arrested mental development? Hyde was a profound believer in the slow power of example. And he was free from that American lust for busy activities and palpable effects that has half spoiled our colleges. He felt he could best help to develop the college by developing his own mind and art.

Too modest and wary to flaunt this conviction, he quietly put it into action. Throughout his career he devoted his mornings almost entirely to meditation and the writing of books, postponing executive duties till the afternoon. His post-meridian labour increased with the size of the college, and though he accomplished it with remarkable despatch, it overloaded him and probably helped to bring on his untimely death. He needed, what every college president should have, a vice-president to relieve him of executive details. But to the end he succeeded in making administration a subordinate matter. He was first of all a vital person and a humane scholar. He did more than deplore the fussy, gregarious mediocrity of American college life. Many deplore it while aggravating it in their own refined way. But Hyde counteracted it by daily withdrawing from it into his study, and by bringing thence a renewed largeness of thought for the college. His associates could see his mind growing through the years and were affected by his example unawares. The younger members of the Faculty knew that the keen interest he took in the private work of each of them was that of a co-labourer. They were deeply and abidingly influenced by the fact that their President, for the best part of every day, presided in scholarly solitude, in strenuous and independent "leisure".

The right collegiate independence which he thus exemplified in his own practice, he inculcated in chapel and classroom. He gave a small portion of his time to classwork and made his students feel that this was an animated episode, by no means an objective-point, in the course of his own studies and theirs. He helped them to become mature and earnest by treating them as such. The class meeting was a consultation of responsible persons with a modest expert. He wrote against professors who "overload with ready-made answers youths who have never put the corresponding questions to themselves—professors who regard their mission as agitators on behalf of their own peculiar views as prior to their obligation to the proportions of truth". But he equally condemned the modern opinion that a professor of the humanities may have no personal convictions, or should conceal them from his students in the supposed interests of truth.

The warm and difficult task of the college was to develop personal convictions while pointing ever to the beautiful standard of "the proportions of truth". Hyde required his students to win a fair knowledge of religious and ethical thought, pre-eminently of great ideas that were held in common by diverse masters in widely separated lands and times. But in the classroom he brought to the forefront "vital choices" (as Mr. Burnett says) for free discussion. And while eliciting the views of the students he gave his own, quietly and firmly. He created a demand for his convictions by not obtruding them, by never concealing them, and by constantly living them. One of his students said in after years: "There are many of us who still think of him almost daily and ask ourselves how he would have decided this or that problem. *What we decide* he would have done, *generally* rules." (Italics mine.) Such was the attitude of Hyde himself towards his own masters. In one of his books, *God's Education of Man*, he remarks: "An intelligent and thoughtful student of the New Testament ought to be able in any circumstance of life to know with substantial accuracy what Jesus would say and do were he placed in that situation." Hyde's work as a teacher was built on an old educational principle that ought to dominate the college—the principle of right and free imitation.

He fostered free decision and he was quick to take note of those youngsters who gave signs, in his own or other classes, of sound and original ability. He would invite them to private conversation in his study and help them to elevate and stabilize their purposes. One of them, now an influential professor of economics in a large university, recalls his "poised and informed attitude towards the world" and his "keen interest in human beings", and concludes with this significant sentence: "I do not remember what we talked about except that it had to do in part with unemployment and peace, but I left his study that evening with the feeling that I had indeed been thinking and talking on a higher level than I ever had before." In these informal talks with youths who were likely to become leaders, Hyde accomplished a great and quiet work for America. He would not spend his private time on students who were unmistakably mediocre. The aloofness of his attitude to them, intellectually, brought him at first a painful unpopularity. This was relieved as time revealed the deeper truth of his charity and the largeness of his educational aims.

His stress on the need of "aristocracy" in American higher education, instead of "democratic uniformity", increased with the years. In 1902 he declared that the "besetting sin" of our colleges was their addiction to "devices which get something out of everybody, instead of putting the best things into the few who are able to receive them". He persuaded a number of his Faculty to reduce their lecture-hours and to meet their students, once a week or so, in small conference groups where individual abilities could have freer scope. He publicly advocated "Pullman courses", as he dubbed them humorously, for the mentally opulent. By 1912 he was able to establish at Bowdoin an advanced course (says Mr. Burnett) "open to some half-dozen carefully selected students, and taught in sequence by about the same number of instructors, picked for excellence from the entire Faculty". The instructors, representing various departments, agreed to centre their efforts in a subject of common interest, the writing of English, and to meet once a month in committee of the whole with the students for the open discussion of opinions and results. The most eager and comprehensive member of the group was Hyde himself.

That course was merely one of his efforts to countervail modern specialism, to foster humane excellence, to set quality above quantity. He saw that this task, under American conditions, was the crying duty of the small and privately endowed institution. He predicted, with an accuracy not yet properly appreciated by those concerned, that this type of institution must follow its manifest destiny far more boldly if it was to maintain a position of real significance "in the crush and competition to which it will be subjected in the course of educational reconstruction". The independent college should sharply distinguish itself from the general run of our educational institutions by being a place where, in an atmosphere of right freedom and leisure, "good work gets just as real a premium for its quality as passable work gets for its quantity". He might have said, "a *higher* premium". But he shrewdly preferred to set before the college a lower and more obvious test, which it has not yet passed.

Chapel, for Hyde, was the centre of the college. It was a regular and needful assembly of the academic community in the presence of its own highest purposes. The perennial discontent of undergraduates regarding this institution was quiescent in his régime. He kept before them in his brief talks the fact that "enjoyable, effective, complete life" is the end of education and of morals. He made them feel that morality and vitality, if conceived in a manly fashion, were synonyms. He brought before them their own vital needs, surprisingly illumined with timely instances. He appealed to their youthful courage and chivalry. While rousing their charity for the sins and sorrows of the world outside the college, he showed them that a very special quality of living was demanded of them as college men. Such and such a fault, he was fond of saying, could find such and such excuses in young persons at large—not in those who had accepted the privileges of the college. Collegiate priggishness was of course a danger, but rather easily avoidable today. The real danger, the deep shame, lay in submission to the easy standards of the world. College men in America, if they were not to be snug and self-deceiving poltroons, must strive to be more or less exemplary.

His approach to religion was ethical and experimental, as it must be for the most part in the modern college, and as it had been in his own case. After a hard and perplexed boyhood in middle Massachusetts, and with the words of a gloomy uncle ringing in his ears, "Stop your gabble and study your Bible", Hyde stood apart from Christianity during most of his undergraduate career, at the same time scorning "gabble". Striving to find the right use for his energy, he took a hearty part in college life even while deprecating its "contemptible details and worthless successes", as he termed them. He was embarrassed when he found himself increasingly regarded as a leader and sought as a counsellor in things of the mind and spirit. He searched his heart more deeply. And one notes in his letters to those at home, amid outbursts of healthy boyishness, such confessions as these: "Let us not waste our time over this worthless gossip about my individual success: I have never succeeded yet in any sense, and the only sense in which I have any hope or desire to succeed is in growing wiser, better, and more useful, not in *being thought* wise and useful by those as ignorant and useless as myself. . . . It seems as though I had a peculiar work to do . . . but I am never very happy myself and so cannot make anyone else so. . . . I feel that I know little of myself, less of God, and nothing of the proper relation between us."

Gradually he was led back to Christianity, and forward to a fresher and broader conception of it, by a plain, humble sense of moral need—assisted, without, by two or three wise teachers and, within, by what used to be called "special grace". He found the divine power at work in himself; but he found it circumspectly. He mistrusted religious feelings even more than bigoted dogmas. In his mature writings he tried to reinstate the idea of dogma in religion, pointing out that the current reaction from it was a piece of baneful sentimentalism. But in his life as a whole nothing stands out so much as his quick and free testing of dogmas and sentiments alike in the light of everyday experience. Always he is aware of the "danger of not converting our insight into life". He writes that "the raw material of the religious life is the distinction between right and wrong", and that the main purpose of thought is to keep this distinction "sharp and clear and bright and sensitive".

In the Bowdoin chapel the good life and the daily moral efforts that it requires were kept in the foreground. God, so to speak, was religiously kept in the background. Cant and sentimentality were starved out. But at the same time the religious imagination was underfed. This obdurate result of New England Dissent is significant in an educator so catholic as Hyde, so determined that the college, free from all narrow traditions, should foster in her undergraduates all the normal human instincts.

No one was more tolerant than he in regard to religious forms. He nicely defined sectarianism as a state of mind in which "differences of apprehension count for more than the object apprehended". A pioneer among American Protestants in practical work for church federation, and in the greater cause of Christian unity of spirit, he centred his efforts in the college. For example, he surprised the students in his classroom–Protestants, Catholics, agnostics, atheists–by successfully luring them to construct a humane creed agreeable to all. The creed was published in *The Outlook*, and widely copied and discussed, in good American fashion. Yet Hyde was well aware of the dangers of popular toleration and wished the college to work against them–soft compromise, mental and spiritual laziness, pride of supposed enlightenment, loss of rooted religious values. The college, in the American turmoil of different races and religions, must redouble her efforts to define "the object apprehended" without sapping the life from "differences of apprehension". She must set herself to cherish what was best in each way of approaching God. Hyde watched with clear appreciation the spread of Roman Catholicism in America in consequence of the growth of our foreign population. He remarked shrewdly: "The American idea of free, secular education will stay, and [therefore] the religious methods of both natives and foreigners will have to be modified to endure: Catholics must grow less authoritarian, natives must grow less sectarian." He criticized his own sect with the same charitable perspicuity that he applied to the others. National attention was aroused by his article in *The Forum* for June, 1892, on "Impending Paganism in New England". He saw that the native church of that region was failing to regain the vital grip on the community which she had lost in the decline of Puritanism. In his last years he was heard to quote with smiling appreciation a wit's remark that the interior of a Congregational church "looked too hortatory, not enough precatory". Devotion could be aided, he knew, by rich forms of worship.

But while appreciating the adventitious value of such forms, his inbred aloofness from them prevented him from really understanding their originative power —the unction and divine sanction which is in them at their best. When he spoke appreciatively of the religious rites and imaginative concepts that stand out in human history, his attitude, without his intention, was often that of patronage rather than of realization. Here one felt that he was caught in the Emersonian tradition, though in admiring that master he had no desire to imitate his deficiency in religious humility. The religious images that have swayed mankind were for Hyde mere, rather than real, symbols. In his view they did not much partake of the Reality which they symbolized. His treatment of them, while often morally penetrating, was lacking in real awe. In brief, he showed how the college could take a fresh hold of religion—not how religion could take a strong hold on the college. He showed how individual members of the college, under modern American conditions, could re-approach religion with freedom and veracity. He left the future to find how the college as a community, and in vital relation to the community at large, could again become, through imaginational development as well as moral earnestness, a power for true and full religion.

In the Bowdoin chapel, says his biographer, "one worshipped somewhat by proxy, perhaps, but in the presence of a real worshipper". The mode of worship was bleak—not so the inmost spirit of the leader. His private devotions, one soon came to feel, must have a certain fullness, a rich and embracing awareness of the "Real Presence", not well conveyed by the services he was conducting. And this discrepancy, I think, helps to account for the touch of constraint and melancholy which marked his demeanour at the reading-desk, and which could not be attributed entirely to academic shyness. His dominant tone in chapel as in everyday life was one of free and steady cheerfulness, in keeping with his humane principles. But often his earnest face would peer along the lines of youthful faces before him with a sort of veiled yearning—a yearning, one felt, for a fuller communion, for more concrete and compelling ways of religious expression. His was a large and social spirit of devotion employing religious forms that no longer appeared to be large and social.

However, one saw that Hyde was a worshipper so fresh and real as to be extraordinary in the modern academic world. It is impossible to convey to those who never heard him the devotional conviction with which he could charge, for attentive spirits, such plain utterances as these: "There is a Good Will at work among us—let us work today with that. . . . A sufficient prayer for today is the third petition of the Lord's Prayer, if only we will try to put it into action today." As previously suggested, his academic congregation, very diverse in their religious opinions and increasingly hostile to conventional Christianity, could not complain that the God of the Christians was obtruded upon them by the President of the college. At the same time, his brief and occasional words on the subject of Deity were notable for an unabashed directness that could rouse the wonder of those who knew how subtly he could reason in his classroom, and how conversant he was with modern philosophy and the problems raised by science. Gradually one came to see the explanation: Hyde feared God so well that he had no fear of theistic ingenuousness. This second fear, with ill results for college undergraduates, has obsessed many modern educators. But Hyde, more learned than most in skeptical philosophy, old and new, was also wiser and more faithful. His faith, or his expression of it, was constricted imaginationally, but not abashed religiously and befuddled mentally, by Protestant modernism—or (if the phrase is more exact) post-Protestant rationalism. He knew only too well how much the gods are the creations of man. But he also knew, unequivocally, the "givenness" of God, as it is now being termed by certain leading thinkers, notably A. E. Taylor in his excellent work, *The Faith of a Moralist.* "The Infinite Being", says Hyde in one of his books, "is there of itself"—a given reality, not only presupposed but really experienced in "finite things and finite thoughts and finite beings".

His college audience saw that the "finite things", the everyday moral experiences, which he kept so vividly in the foreground had always for him a divine background more real than they, though never realizable in any worthwhile sense apart from them. Turning to his writings one received the same impression. Their dominant theme was practical ethics. The ground-tone, rising here and there into memorable phrases, was the sense of "a perpetual presence, the abiding secret of all our peace and the permanent source of all our power". That "presence" was the source and could be the fulfiller of our daily needs and efforts. These were real because it was real, and its reality could be firmly apprehended through these and through these alone. Thus one came to see the ground of Hyde's sustained vitality; of "the sting and excitement" that the little episodes of the academic world could have for him; of the peace and power that made themselves felt in his daily life. One perceived in him a daily inward working.

Moral and intellectual efforts went hand in hand in his case to an extraordinary degree. It was this that enabled him to keep philosophy and religion so closely associated and yet so clearly distinct. That task, which surely stands in the forefront of college problems today, proves too much, continually, for academic thinkers. Many of them sidestep it prudently. A few dismiss it rashly, pursuing some metaphysical notion that appears to unify the universe, at least for undergraduates, till jostled into the background by some other hasty notion. Others attempt the right task but with a kind of devastating circumspection—collegiate conscientiousness, mental persistence, and spiritual inertness. For, living as they do in a morally protected atmosphere, impeccably enough, they are apt to be deficient in vital moral energy and therefore out of touch with the real working of the religious forces which they are trying to clarify in the light of philosophic thought. The net result for the college of these three attitudes is a Pyrrhonism all the more debilitating because not clearly avowed, and because it has an air of large-minded superiority to common opinion. Hyde fought that Pyrrhonism. Above its "large-mindedness" he planted the standard of a real magnanimity.

A *collegiate* magnanimity it may be called, without contradiction in terms, for it was proper to and appropriable by the college community. It was imitable and infectious. For it was due, not to rare intellectual gifts, but to Hyde's use of his gifts with rare dedication. Collegiate complacency of every kind was rebuked by his example. In his neighbourhood, stationary moral propriety could not comfortably identify itself with morality. Spiritual dullness or laziness could not masquerade as true tolerance or intellectuality. The divergency of religion and philosophy could not be slurred over. Nor on the other hand could it be made a matter for mental preoccupation, as though it were a problem to be solved by busy classroom minds. It had to be regarded as a stimulus for that inner moral effort, that daily striving of the lower self towards the higher self, from which alone the deepest insights come. One saw that the light of his own striving illumined for Hyde both philosophy and religion. It enabled him, though he had plenty of limitations in each of those two realms, to use both of them fruitfully, passing freely from one to the other. With the conviction of personal experience, he could write in this manner: "The scholar lives in intimate and conscious presence of a thought larger, higher, holier than his own. . . ." And also in this: "It may be a help toward a truer apprehension of God's attitude toward us to think of him as the patient and faithful, firm and friendly Teacher, who first constrains our wills to learn unwelcome lessons of obedience to law; then wins our hearts to voluntary allegiance by the manifestations of his grace; and finally leaves us to work out largely for ourselves, in original and independent ways, that character which comes through loving service and which is perfect freedom."

(*To be concluded*)

The Blind Poet: Sidney Lanier

ROBERT PENN WARREN

MORE than half a century has elapsed since the death of Sidney Clopton Lanier, a period sufficient for the ordinary sifting of literary reputation. His body was interred in the Greenwood Cemetery of Baltimore in September, 1881; his fame has been entrusted to the usual repositories. He has had his biography, his official edition of prose and verse, his courteous commentary in the textbooks, and even a circle of pious enthusiasts. It is doubtful if his new biography will augment his fame.*

It is doubtful, in the first place, because the biographer, Aubrey Harrison Starke, has nothing important to add to the body of common discussion. Certainly he has assembled a mass of material more formidable than has been previously accessible, but this material is, generally, of only corroborative value. It alters in neither outline nor meaning the more expert presentation made by Edwin Mims in his biography of Lanier, on which, as a matter of fact, the present writer seems sometimes to lean too heavily: Lanier's character remains unchanged for our contemplation.

In the second place, Mr. Starke entices with no novelty or acuteness of interpretation. "Professor Mims's biography makes beautifully clear the relation of Lanier to the South," Mr. Starke remarks, "but the time has come, I feel, for us to see Lanier first of all as a Southerner who grew beyond all sectional limitation." Again, Lanier's identification with the "New South", on which Professor Mims bestows emphasis, was nothing more nor less than identification with the national (*i.e.*, Northern) ideal and programme. But on this issue Professor Mims is crystal clear: "He was national rather than provincial, open-minded not prejudiced, modern and not mediaeval. His characteristics . . . are all in direct contrast with those of the conservative Southerner. . . . He therefore makes his appeal to every man who is today working for the betterment of industrial, educational, and literary conditions in the South. . . . He was a pioneer worker in building up what he liked to speak of as the New South:

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* SIDNEY LANIER, A BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICAL STUDY *by Aubrey Harrison Starke* (UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PRESS. $5.00)

> "The South whose gaze is cast
> No more upon the past,
> But whose bright eyes the skies of promise sweep,
> Whose feet in paths of progress swiftly leap;
> And whose fresh thoughts, like cheerful rivers run
> Through odorous ways to meet the morning sun!"

To this interpretation, it may be said, Professor Mims has given adequate documentation.

On the critical side Mr. Starke's performance seems at best superficial; that is, he rarely attempts analysis, and when he does, concentrates on some detail which is almost irrelevant. In reference to the *Song of the Chattahoochee*, he says: "Any child can hear in it the music of the water, but the child who has heard this too often, may fail later to note the varied metre of the poem, the use of short vowels, liquid consonants, alliteration, internal rhyme, and skilful repetition by means of which the music is recorded. Nor does early familiarity with the poem make for intelligent appreciation of its central idea, the river's swift answer to the call of duty." Or again about another poem: "There the inclusion of an extra syllable, *e'en*, in the fifth line of the second stanza spoils the metre." Elsewhere grandiose analogy is Mr. Starke's most congenial method: "The *Symphony* possesses a music more varied and more beautiful than that of *Corn*, and a richness of imagery that comes from a close observation unsurpassed by that of Marlowe or Shakespeare or Keats for accuracy." The Archbishop of Canterbury might be added to the list.

But Mr. Starke has defined his own impulse as evangelical rather than critical: "Because he was and is one of us, a living figure of our own world, we need to know him, and so long as he becomes known to us for what he was, so long as he becomes known not merely to some but to all who love and cherish the American spirit and our great men, it matters little whether we find him in his poetry or in his letters, or in the tradition that lingers, or in the beautiful face of Keyser's bronze bust. It is only essential that we come to know him: until we have, discussion of his final rank as a poet is somewhat futile, and after we have, it appears unnecessary."

To quarrel with this would be churlish.

But, specifically, what does a more profane curiosity discover in the Lanier who was born in Macon, Georgia, on February 3, 1842, and died of consumption at Lynn, in the mountains of North Carolina, on September 7, 1881? As a boy he drilled a company of archers and read Scott, Bulwer, and the *Arabian Nights*; later he attended Oglethorpe College, served creditably the Confederate cause as a mounted scout, and read Shelley, Coleridge, Keats, Wordsworth, Chatterton, Carlyle, Tennyson, Ruskin, Elizabeth Browning, and the German Romantic writers—Richter, Novalis, Heine, Schiller, Lessing, Schelling, Tieck, and Goethe, whose territory "was ever afterwards Lanier's spiritual home". In 1865 he was released from Point Lookout Prison, where his flute had comforted a fellow sufferer, Father Tabb, and returned to Macon with a few poor poems, a poorer novel, a determination to be an artist, either musical or literary, and a ruined constitution.

In this period, of which he could say "pretty much the whole of life has been merely not dying", Lanier had married. The rest of his short life was a two-fold struggle, a heroic struggle against disease and a struggle, sometimes a trifle less than heroic, to gratify his literary ambition. By Lanier's own account Stedman once had to advise him in a friendly way, "not to be asking poets to dinner lest I might be thought to be pushing my way". And again, when the *Nation* rather soundly criticized the lack of clarity in his Centennial Ode for the Philadelphia celebration of 1876 as evidence "not so much of want of practice in composition as of discipline of thought", Lanier wrote: ". . . it has naturally caused me to make a merciless arraignment and trial of my artistic purposes; and an unspeakable content arises out of the revelation that they come from an ordeal confirmed in innocence and clearly defined in their relation to all things. I do not hate people who have so cruelly maltreated me; they knew not what they did; and my life will be of some avail if it shall teach even one of them a consideration that may bloom in tenderer treatment of any future young artist." Such was

The artist's pain—to walk his blood-stained ways,
A special soul yet judged as general—
The endless grief of art, the sneer that slays,
The war, the wound, the grave, the funeral pall.

In fact, although Lanier demanded of the South a stern and non-sectional literary criticism, he himself adopted in the face of critics an attitude either querulous or Christ-like; on the whole, he seemed to find the latter more satisfying.

The German Romantics, we are told, and the English Romantics with their Victorian brethren for that matter, defined the demesne that was always to remain Lanier's "spiritual home". But there was some commerce between the spiritual home and the perfectly substantial, though disordered, home Lanier occupied in the South of Reconstruction. From the spiritual abode he brought a message which, according to Mr. Starke, is "particularly worth listening to in the present period of economic and social unrest". The message appears in varying forms, in the poems and in the several volumes of collected prose. It is a message sometimes contradictory or vague, as a communication from the realm of spirits is apt to sound in perverse mundane ears. Coleridge said that his early reading gave him a mind "habituated to the vast"; Lanier's early reading gave him a mind habituated not to the vast but to the confused, to the blurred. Or possibly it was not the fault of the reading.

"For as time flows on," Lanier wrote in *Retrospects and Prospects*, an early essay, but one which differs from later work only in the greater naïveté of detail and example, "For as time flows on, man and nature steadily etherealize. As time flows on, the sense-kingdom continually decreases, and the soul-kingdom continually increases, *and this not by the destruction of sense's subjects, but by a system of promotions in which sensuous things, constantly etherealizing, constantly acquire the dignity of spiritual things, and so diminish their own number and increase the other.*" This sentiment is a sort of text for Lanier's work, equally for his applause of science and his applause of small diversified farms, for the *Psalm of the West* and the *English Novel*, for *The Marshes of Glynn* and his nationalism, for his admiration of Beethoven and his admiration of big business.

Nature, he said, etherealizes. "In Greek times Nature rose halfway to the dignity of man, with her oreads and nymphs and fauns; in our times she has risen all the way." This new relation, this etherealization, is expressed in the "nature-metaphor", which is a union "of human nature with physical nature", the embodiment of man's broadened love of the universe,[*] and in the advances of the studies in physical science.

For man this etherealization seems to correspond to the development of "personality", which since the Renaissance has assumed three characteristic new relations. Lanier's little chart in the *English Novel* sums up the whole matter. And all of these new relations, which find their characteristic expressions in Music, the Novel, and Science, respectively, are rooted in Love.

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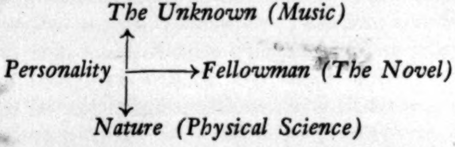
[*] The "nature-metaphor" may possibly be a result of Lanier's reading of Coleridge, a debasement of Coleridge's discussion of nature as a source of appropriate symbol for human experience.



The little chart, in itself, may be irrelevant. The important thing is this: where did it guide Lanier? In literature it led him to prefer Tennyson to Milton, because Tennyson is "more spiritual" and has purged himself of Milton's "purely physical accessories". He preferred George Eliot to Fielding, that "muck of the classics", and, incidentally, to Shakespeare, presumably because she "shows man what he may be, in terms of what he is". In architecture it led him to regard the rapidity and lightness of commercial construction as an indication of "the veritable etherealizing change which it has undergone". It led him to applaud photography as an "etherealized" painting, an art which now "has risen and floated away free as air and sunshine into all homes and all wastes, simply by having lightened itself of the purely material load of colour".

Few people, however, have taken Lanier seriously as a critic; but many people have taken him seriously as a prophet, as a man with a message. The element of this message which, in the not-so-distant past, received most approbation was his nationalism, that doctrine transcending merely sectional concern or prejudice. This nationalism represented, I surmise, an "etherealization". Actually, it can be cast in terms of his formula: "The soul kingdom increases . . . by a system of promotions in which sensuous things [*i.e.*, the States, the individual localities with conflicting traditions and interests], constantly etherealizing, constantly acquire the dignity of spiritual things [*i.e.*, the Nation]." The basis of such new etherealized relations, it is worthy of recollection, is Love—that "key to Lanier's philosophy". The Civil War, recently concluded, had been the great single step toward the achievement of the new nationalism. The Civil War, we may infer, was, if not itself an act of love, a step toward a loving synthesis. As a matter of fact, in the *Psalm of the West*, that favourite document for Lanier's nationalism, the fratricidal and sanguine years of 1861-65 are represented allegorically as a joust between two knights, *Heart* (the South) and *Brain* (the North):

> They charged, they struck; both fell, both bled;
> Brain rose again, ungloved;
> Heart fainting smiled, and softly said,
> *My love to my beloved.*
>
> Heart and Brain! no more be twain;
> Throb and think, one flesh again!
> Lo! they weep, they turn, they run;
> Lo! they kiss: Love, thou art one!

In the year 1876 this must have struck some as slightly unrealistic.

Lanier was not realistic. He wrote as a poet of the new nationalism, and at the same time he protested (although he once found it in his heart to approve big corporations because they were "needed") against the domination of Trade, by which he meant, apparently, commerce and industry. "The worker must pass to his work in the terrible town," he complained. Or he surveyed the "hell-coloured smoke of the factories". Specifically, as in the *Symphony*, his objection is that Trade dries up the springs of Love, that its ethics are those of war, that it does not permit the labourer to recline "where Art and Nature sing and smile". Mr. Starke submits that the *Symphony* "presents an intelligible program for social amelioration". This program is Love, and the instrument of its execution is music: "Love God utterly, and thy neighbour as thyself—so I think the time will come when music rightly developed to its now-little-foreseen grandeur, will be found to be a revelation of all gospels in one." But what Mr. Starke fails to see, as Lanier failed, is that the nationalism mystically embodied in the *Psalm of the West* was a nationalism of Trade. *Amor vincit omnia* —even the contradiction.

Lanier's evangelical concern with science meant a similar contradiction, or rather a two-edged one, as related to art and to society. Science, along with the nature-metaphor, he regarded as an indication of the Love of Nature . . . the new *rapport* between Man and Nature. "We found", he said to his audience in Baltimore, "that science and poetry had been developing alongside each other ever since early in the seventeenth century; inquiring into the general effect of this long contact, we could only find that it was to make our general poetry greatly richer in substance and finer in form." It is, probably, a defect of taste to prefer "darling Tennyson" to Milton; it is a defect of another order to confound science with art, the abstract with the concrete, the practical with the contemplative.

And Science be known as the sense making love to the
All,
And Art be known as the soul making love to the All,
And Love be known as the marriage of man with the
All—
Till Science to knowing the Highest shall lovingly turn,
Till Art to loving the Highest shall consciously burn,
Till Science to Art as a man to a woman shall yearn.

It is no wonder that Lanier likewise failed to perceive that the science he adored was the handmaid of the industrial system he detested. But in enthusiasm for his American myth he sometimes even forgot that science was a Venus and made her into a sort of Amazon with brand and buckler.

Yea, where the taunting fall and grind
Of Nature's Ill doth send

Such mortal challenge of a clown
Rude thrust upon the soul,
That men but smile where mountains frown
Or scowling waters roll,
And Nature's front of battle down
Do hurl from pole to pole.

In such moments he did achieve realism.

Now all of Lanier's judgements on the arts, as judgements, are devoid of interest except such interest as is felt in eccentricity. His social judgements in themselves are interesting only in so far as they illustrate the peculiar and sometimes irresponsible confusion into which the Southern liberal lapsed. The artistic judgements, to put it bluntly, simply mean that Lanier, despite his professions of extreme sensitivity, was really lacking in capacity for aesthetic perception. He did not *see* anything. He was a doctrinaire; that is, he appreciated a work of art to the degree in which it supported his especial theory of progress. But that very theory of progress, and his particular social applications of it, mean that he did not think except in obvious and incomplete analogy. These various judgements are worthy of discussion at all only because they may clarify, to some extent, the properties of his poetry.

Lanier's fame depends on his poetry. If he had not written the poems, he would now be a scarcely remembered flute-player with liberal views and a handsome head. His personality, Mr. Starke to the contrary, would not command us.

Lanier's conception of himself, of the poet's rôle, was a paradoxical one, but one characteristic of the century in which he lived. The poet was a "special soul yet judged as general", a sufferer who indulged the "endless grief of art". There is an element of self-dramatization in much of his poetry, for instance, in *Sunrise*, in *The Marshes of Glynn*, and in *Clover*; the poet, withdrawn from the humming haunts of men, is presented in the throes of an experience. But in his letters this characteristic is most obvious: the critics "knew not what they did". He was "a pard-like spirit, beautiful and swift", but unlike Shelley, he was never unsure as to whether it was the mark of Cain or Christ he bore on the brow. Paradoxically, the poet is not only a special soul set apart, but a social prophet. That is, the business of the poet is two-fold: he must "express" his own etherealizing personality and must reform the personalities of other people. Or perhaps it was not as paradoxical as it seems; the egotist imposes himself.

The difficulty, for Lanier, was insoluble. No poem of his represents a single vision, for the fatal self-consciousness intervenes. The obvious criticism is that he is didactic. But, more fundamentally, the trouble was that he never understood the function of idea in art. He regularly performed an arbitrary disjunction, both in creation and in criticism, between the idea and the form in which it might be embodied. Painting etherealizes by freeing itself of the "purely material load of colour". *The Princess* is superior to *Paradise Lost*. Or religion etherealizes by losing its "material props", by which, I suppose, he meant dogma, ritual, and, finally, the Church itself. Lanier's poetry, by consequence, was intellectual in a bad sense —in the sense that Browning or Tennyson, or better, Elizabeth Browning, all better poets, were frequently intellectual. The idea is never realized; it remains abstract; it does not achieve the status of experience.

Lanier's imagery, in this respect, is instructive. Early in his poetical career he wrote to his father: "I have frequently noticed in myself a tendency to a diffuse style; a disposition to push my metaphors too far, employing a multitude of words to heighten the patness of the image and so making of it a *conceit*. . . ." This self-criticism has been almost consistently echoed by writers on Lanier, such as Professor Howard Mumford Jones, with the assumption that the conceit is necessarily bad. Lanier occasionally did employ images that might be termed conceits, but they were bad conceits, "yoked by violence". For instance, in an early poem revised in 1879:

> A star that had remarked her pain
> Shone straightway down that leafy lane,
> And wrought his image, mirror-plain,
> Within a tear that on her lash hung gleaming.
> "Thus Time", I cried, "is but a tear
> Someone hath wept 'twixt hope and fear,
> Yet in his little lucent sphere
> Our star of stars, Eternity, is beaming."

Compare this with Donne's more famous tear:

> On a round ball
> A workman that hath copies by, can lay
> An Europe, Afrique, and an Asia,
> And quickly make that, which was nothing, *All*,
> So doth each teare
> Which thee doth weare,
> A globe, yea world by that impression grow,
> Till thy teares mixt with mine doe overflow
> This world, by waters sent from thee, my heaven dissolved so.

Lanier's so-called conceit is bold and vague; Donne's is bold, but precise on each term of comparison. Lanier's is, by reason of its vagueness, artificial; Donne's is artificial only in the sense that all imagery is artificial, that is, from the scientific view.

But more generally, in the attempt to communicate a poetic idea, Lanier resorted to something that is more like a fragmentary allegory than like the conceit. The conceit, I believe, differs structurally from the images commonly called metaphor or simile only in that it affords more than one point of contact between the two elements involved in the image, more than one term of comparison. The extension of contact invites a prolonged contemplation; by calling attention to the purely logical form of the comparison it provokes a scientific criticism of that comparison which is really pseudo-scientific. The resolution of what might, for lack of a better term, be called the *internal strain* of the conceit gives that special effect associated with metaphysical poetry. But the resolution, the success of the conceit, depends on precisely the same factors as those involved in the other types of imagery. Now an allegory seems to be a system of assigned equivalents. Such a system is comprised by the Ox representing the "Course-of-Things" and the heads of clover representing the poets in *Clover*; by the cornstalk representing the poet in *Corn*; or by the "young Adam of the West" representing America in *Psalm of the West*. Cases of incidental allegory are numerous, as in the much admired *Stirrup-Cup*, the first division of *Sunrise*, the next to the last stanza of *Corn*, *Song of the Future*, or *Marsh Song*. The last is interesting because it presents in protracted form a mannerism which often occurs in Lanier's work, the use of literary allusion with allegorical implication. I shall only quote the first stanza:

> Over the monstrous shambling sea,
>   Over the Caliban sea,
> Bright Ariel-cloud, thou lingerest:
> Oh wait, oh wait, in the warm red West,–
>   Thy Prospero I'll be.

Except for the first line this stanza conveys no perception, and even the literal, the intellectual, meaning is dependent on a knowledge of *The Tempest* for comprehensibility. The allegory, even, is second-hand. This is perfectly arbitrary, arbitrary in the same way that the assignment to various instruments of different attitudes in regard to Trade is arbitrary in the *Symphony*. It is but another example of Lanier's failure to realize an idea poetically.

Lanier was right, however, when he commented on his tendency to diffuseness, a fault which arose from vagueness of perception. In Andrew Marvell's *Bermudas* occur the lines:

> He hangs in shades the orange bright
> Like golden lamps in a green night . . .

By insistence (again something related to his allegorical bias) Lanier debases a similar image in *Tampa Robins:*

> Burn, golden globes in leafy sky,
> My orange-planets: crimson I
> Will shine and shoot among the spheres
> (Blithe meteor that no mortal fears)
>   And thrid the heavenly orange-tree
>   With orbits bright of minstrelsy.

Lanier confuses the visual image, orange-planets, with "orbits bright of minstrelsy", which is no image at all. But a better instance appears in *Clover*:

> . . . Now the little winds, as bees,
> Bowing the blooms come wandering where I lie
> Mixt soul and body with the clover-tufts,
> Light on my spirit, give from wing and thigh
> Rich pollens and divine sweet irritants
> To every nerve, and freshly make report
> Of inmost Nature's secret autumn thought

Unto some soul of sense within my frame
That owns each cognizance of the outlying five,
And sees, hears, tastes, smells, touches, all in one.

Aside from a vile and pedestrian versification, the chief fault of this passage is vagueness which results in diffuseness. Compare with this the precision, the poised hypnotic quality, of Marvell's couplet from *Thoughts in a Garden*, of which it is reminiscent:

Annihilating all that's made
To a green thought in a green shade.

If Lanier read Marvell, he read him without understanding.

Much of Lanier's imagery, much that has been excessively admired, reduces to nothing more than verbalism.

Tolerant plains, that suffer the sea and the rains and
the sun,
Ye spread and span like the catholic man who hath
mightily won
God out of knowledge and good out of infinite pain
And sight out of blindness and purity out of a stain.

To me this conveys nothing. But again:

Far down the wood, a one-desiring dove
Times me the beating of the heart of love . . .

And this:

To bend of beauty the bow, or hold of silence the
string . . .

Or this:

The beech dreams balm, as a dreamer hums a song . . .

These lines, as far as I can make out, exemplify the "nature-metaphor", that "union of human nature with physical nature". Abstractness is the quality most apparent; the reader neither sees the *plains*, nor understands the *tolerance*.

With this usually goes another variety of abstractness, a variety expressed in Lanier's fondness for adjectives like *dear*, *sweet*, *adorable*, and *thrilling*, and for lines like

Of the dim sweet woods, of the dear dark woods . . .

This abstractness, it seems, derives from Lanier's sentimentality, a property quite as common and offensive in his prose as in his verse. ("That adorable sonnet", "our adorable John Keats".) That is, Lanier insists on an emotional attitude for which he can provide no stimulus; the reader is asked to accept the poet's experience on trust, the one thing a reader declines to do, unless he, like the poet, is a sentimentalist.

This sentimentality is not confined to detail, but appears, naturally enough, at the very root of Lanier's inspiration. It is a result of his basic bewilderment. The general theme of all his poetry, the critics say, is Love, which apparently was the name he bestowed on any emotional disturbance. I have shown, I hope, that when he tried to define his attitudes in presumably sober prose, he merely resolved a confusion or contradiction by appeal to that term. In poetry his theme is most commonly manifested in what has been called his "nature-worship". (It is well to remember that Lanier, in his fairly acute criticism of Whitman in the *English Novel*, said realistically enough: "Nature is the tyrant of tyrants.") Despite the fact that he has been frequently praised as an observer of Nature, most recently by Mr. Starke and Mr. Ludwig Lewisohn, he exhibited a remarkably feeble capacity for seeing anything; his use of imagery makes that clear. He referred to Nature as a vague embodiment of his private agitations, his desire for marriage with the All.

> . . . . . I am fain to face
> The vast sweet visage of space.

'Tis here by the marsh, he said

> 'Tis here, 'tis here thou canst unhand thy heart
> And breathe it free, and breathe it free . . .

As with all sentimentalists, Lanier's emotionalism was a species of self-indulgence, which probably accounts for the fact that he was able to communicate nothing. It was a species of self-indulgence both sensual and effeminate, as his relaxed rhythmic effects often imply. But rhythm is not the only evidence. The glades in the marshes are

> Cells for the passionate pleasure of prayer to the soul that grieves. . . .

And he could commit himself to these lines:

> Tell me, sweet burly-barked, man-bodied Tree
> That mine arms in the dark are embracing, dost know
> From what fount are these tears at thy feet which flow?

The most charitable pronouncement on this, as on much of Lanier's poetry, is that it is absurd.

Lanier has only a doubtful importance for us. What he had to say has been said by better men in a better way: Wordsworth, Coleridge, Tennyson, Shelley, Emerson, Carlyle, Browning, Longfellow, Ruskin, Swinburne. Lanier merely recapitulated in a vulgar and naïve version what today may appear as their fallacies and confusions, the unsatisfying quality of their work. He was the final product of all that was dangerous in Romanticism: his theory of personality, his delusion of prophecy, his aesthetic premise, his uninformed admiration of science, his nationalism, his passion for synthesis, his theory of progress. What was valuable in his century passed him by. He was admired because, as Tennyson to England, he spoke to America, and tardily to the South, in the accent of its dearest anticipations:

> Now the glittering Western land
> Twins the day-lit Eastern Strand;
> Now white Freedom's sea-bird wing
> Roams the Sea of Everything;
> Now the freemen to and fro
> Bind the tyrant sand and snow,
> Snatching Death's hot bolt ere hurled,
> Flash new life around the world,
> Sun the secrets of the hills,
> Shame the gods' slow-grinding mills,
> Prison Yesterday in Print,
> Read To-morrow's weather-hint,
> Haste before the halting Time,
> Try new virtue and new crime,
> Mould new faiths, devise new creeds,
> Run each road that frontward leads,
> Driven by an Onward-ache,
> Scorning souls that circles make.

After all, Mr. Starke may be right. Perhaps we should know Lanier. He may help us to assess our heritage.

The Restoration of Property

VI. *The Essential Principles*

HILAIRE BELLOC

THE restoration of property means, and has meant throughout history in nearly all places and times, primarily the restoration of property in land. When men have become wage-slaves they think in terms of income. When they are economically free they think in terms of property. Most modern men living under industrial conditions regard economic reform as essentially a redistribution of income; property is for them an illusion; the reality behind it is income. Property for them means only an arrangement whereby a certain income is secured. Free men look at it just the other way. They think of income as the product of property, and the typical form of property, which is also the foundational form, is property in *land*. Under the Eastern despotisms, as also under barbaric, nomad conditions, property in land is either denied in theory or unknown in practice, but in our Western world it is, and has been throughout all our development, the guarantee of citizenship and the foundation thereof.

On this account there is throughout the West (that is, throughout Christendom) an instinct for preserving or, if it has been lost, for restoring widely distributed property in land. During all the stable periods of our civilization such a wide distribution of property in land, among free men at any rate, was the rule. When it became the exception society grew troubled and that unnatural state of affairs, the presence of men politically free but economically unfree, produced dangerous strains resulting sometimes in a violent transformation of society.

That is what happened in the heart of the Roman Empire towards the end of its highest period. During the Dark Ages well distributed property in land gradually reappeared; during the Middle Ages it was the universal rule. Even in the early part thereof the serf might still be constrained to work for his Lord, but he was secure in the ownership of a portion of his native land not subject to competitive rent, inalienable so long as the customary dues were paid, and his land passed on from him to his descendants. In most countries this state of affairs developed after the Middle Ages into the establishment of a free peasantry, that is, of citizens possessing, in numbers sufficient to determine the character of their society, land of their own, coupled with political as well as economic freedom.

There were parts of Europe, however, in which the clock was set back, notably in Great Britain and the Protestant north-eastern Germanies. The peasantry were swallowed up by the greater landowners and became a proletariat. In England the historical process is now familiar to most educated men, though English official history long remained silent upon it. First came the strengthening of the greater landowners by the loot of the Church in the sixteenth century, then in the seventeenth century came the eating up by the greater landowners of the smaller yeomanry, notably under the ironically entitled "Statute of Frauds", passed by Parliament, that is, by the greater landowners themselves (who were by that time masters of the country) in the reign of Charles II. Today England is the typical example of a country in which the desire for land and the sense of ownership in it has, in the mass of the people, fallen to its lowest.

English conditions therefore afford the "zero-point" for a policy of recovery. If it be possible to restore well distributed property in land under English conditions today it will be possible to restore such well distributed property in land anywhere. Here, however, we must repeat the principle laid down at the beginning of these articles, that you will not get well divided property in any form, whether in land or anything else, unless there is some desire present in the community for its acquirement. There must be some motive force present; you cannot compel people to become economically free if they do not desire economic freedom or if they have so completely lost the instinct for it that they confuse the reception of a secure revenue with freedom. A secure revenue can be guaranteed under any form of slavery, State slavery or private slavery; it is not only not identical with, but, as an ideal, it can be shown actually to militate against, economic freedom.

But at this point we must introduce very important distinctions, too often left on one side. These distinctions are as follows:

(1) A distinction between agricultural and urban land, or, to make a more exact definition, a distinction between land mainly occupied for the production of agricultural stuff and land occupied by the man who produces things by machinery or as a craftsman.

(2) A distinction between land occupied by the owner and land occupied by someone other than the owner, who pays a rent for it. And let us remember that in all this discussion the word "land" includes buildings and other immovables attached to land.

It must be a first principle in attempting the reconstruction of property in land that agricultural land shall be treated differently from urban land, and that the burden upon land occupied by the owner shall be markedly less than the burden on land used as a source of profit by letting it out to others. Both these distinctions are revolutionary as applied to the society in which we live today. Both are essential to the recovery of property in land.

As to the second, the distinction between land used by the owner and land not used by him, unless it is made and insisted upon and expressed in social law and custom, the effort at the reconstruction of well distributed property in land fails. Today a man in England inheriting from his father a house of which the rental value is, say, £50 a year, is taxed upon it exactly as though he were getting £50 a year rent by letting it out to somebody else. This social falsehood is fundamental, and undermines the whole situation. There must be a radical difference in the burdens imposed upon land occupied, as land should be occupied, by a human family living thereon, and land occupied by others from whom the owner draws tribute. Throughout the history of our civilization the pretence that the two were the same has led to the breakdown of society, and if we desire to restore society we must restore the simple principle that a man living under his own roof and on his own land shall have the advantage over a man who uses his property only to exploit others.

But as to distinguishing between agricultural and urban land, or let us say between land occupied mainly for agricultural production, and the house with or without a garden occupied by a craftsman, or even by the wage-slave, the problem is different because under modern conditions there is difficulty in distinguishing between the two.

You can settle simply enough by inquisition and declaration whether a man is or is not living under his own roof, whether a man is or is not paying rent to others for the privilege of a human home, but it is not so easy to distinguish nowadays between land that is urban and land that is rural.

In the thirteenth century the distinction was clear, and it is clearer today in societies where there is a strong peasantry than in societies based upon industrialism. Even in England and America it is possible to draw a working distinction. Land can be registered and by inspection verified as used in the main for the one purpose or for the other, with the policy of always leaning towards the recognition of the agricultural rather than the urban type. As for the urban type, there ought to be a simple rule that every lease should automatically contain the power of purchase by instalment, that any lease not containing the same should be void if it were a lease for more than a certain number of years. And, should this ordinance lead to the restriction of long leases, that should be met by forbidding the short lease without the option of renewal for a longer period. In this as in every other parallel case every effort should be made to reduce the function of usury: that it could be abolished entirely until or if society is remodelled is doubtful.

It will be argued of course that the greater part of tenancy under the industrial system today cannot envisage long leases or ultimate proprietorship. But such an objection is not to the point. We are not attempting to reconstruct property in land universally and at short notice. We are attempting a beginning wherever conditions may be favourable. And if today these conditions were observed with regard to non-agricultural land a beginning could be made.

Now, as to agricultural land, which is the real crux of the affair, even in such countries as Great Britain (I mean England, Scotland and Wales, excluding Ireland) the problem has a special character of its own.

Let us suppose that there be in Great Britain today a sufficient remnant of men with the tradition of economic freedom and with the tradition of using the land. What are the conditions under which this remnant may be fostered and made to grow? If we can be certain of these, in the island as it now is, we can *a fortiori* apply those principles to other countries where the desire for land is more widely spread.

There would seem to apply to this problem the following principles, which I do not put down in any order of importance, for each of them is essential.

(1) You cannot make a peasant direct out of the townsman. You may graft the townsman on to the peasant, an existing peasantry can train and teach and digest into itself a certain moderate proportion of townsmen, but you cannot take the townsman and set him down on the land, even under the most favourable conditions, and expect him to live upon it. He will fail

(as the phrase goes) "to make a living"; that is, he will soon throw up his job in disgust. You will get exceptional men here and there who can transform themselves, there are still men in the towns who have hereditary instincts for the land, there are others who develop even without experience an understanding of the land, but the mass of men brought up under urban conditions, especially under modern urban conditions, come on the thing the wrong way round, and are therefore soon repelled by it. They are often attracted by the externals of country life, but have no liking for its practice. Their conception and, what is more important, their habit, of labour is a mechanical repetition through a limited number of hours during which they have to work at a pressure which renders such limitation necessary.

Agricultural work is the other way about. It is multiple rather than repetitive. It is not generally intense. It cannot be limited in hours, but must be indefinitely elastic. Further, there is this fundamental spiritual difference between the two: agricultural work is an interest when it is pursued for one's own sake, while modern mechanical urban work is a grievous task of which men always desire to be rid as soon as may be. The peasant goes on working slowly in his highly varied task throughout the whole of a long summer's day, and is filled with his occupation. But he keeps it voluntary, prepared to take his own recreation at his own times and to fill in with this or that the hours when he cannot work in the open.

(2) The second principle is this: the land will supply under well divided property no more than a modest sustenance under normal conditions. The man

with a small freehold which he cultivates himself with the aid of his family must not expect to be better off, and usually will not be so well off, in actual dollars and cents as the wage-slave of a corresponding station in society.

It is one of the first things remarked by a wage-slave coming from industrial societies among a peasantry that the peasants are "beggarly". There is, of course, another reason for this besides the fact that the land must not be expected to provide more than a moderate sustenance, that other reason being the passion of the peasant for independence. It makes him keen to make the smallest sums of money, to hesitate on spending where he can save, to abhor magnificence, luxuries, and every form of what he feels to be waste.

I have used the phrase "actual dollars and cents", but to this there is an important reservation. Cobbett's small freeholder with a pig, perhaps a couple of milch cows, and communal rights over and above his limited pasturage and arable, would not, if you added up the market value of all that he got by his labour, have an income superior to the regularly paid labourer of the town. But he has two advantages: freedom, that is a sustenance under his own control; and quality, that is a sustenance better in every way, in material, in hours, in choice, in locale; the peasant eats not only of his own produce but off his own table and at his own hours.

(3) The third principle attaching to well divided property in agricultural land is the principle that a man should himself live off the actual produce as much as possible. That, in practice, he can hardly ever do so altogether is true; there will always be division

of labour, and with a peasantry determined on acquiring a maximum in order to preserve its independence such differentiation will often be pushed to an extreme limit. You will find many cases upon the Continent of men who live upon a tiny patch of vineyard. Their direct sustenance therefrom is only, say, a couple of gallons of wine a week for themselves and their dependants. They must obtain their bread and meat and clothing and necessary repairs of house and steading from the sale of their surplus. If the wine is of a special quality they will not even drink of their own product but sell it all. Even where there is a mixed holding much will be sold, under the conditions of a high civilization, for the purchase of necessaries which the holding does not provide. But the underlying principle remains, and the more it is kept in view the sounder will the position be: live of your own.

(4) The fourth principle will, I am afraid, when it is stated plainly, appear fantastic, but it is essential. The burden laid upon the land of the small owner must be light, the tribute he has to pay—wherein I include usury in all its forms—must be a minimum. In other words, when you are attempting to re-establish a peasantry under adverse conditions that peasantry must be *privileged* as against the diseased society around it.

Today false statistics could easily be prepared showing that a great mass of English land is in the possession of those who till it; but as a fact it is really in the possession of money-lenders—principally the banks. The ownership is nominal; the real control is in the money-lending power which exacts tribute.

Now, unless you are prepared to start afresh with a system under which usury shall not drain the life-blood of the tiller of the soil, your efforts will fail. Your co-operative banks which charge only a moderate usury, and can often maintain that there is no true usury at all because the loans are productive, are wrong in principle. The tillage of land on a small scale is such that if you burden it with these outgoings you wound it with a wound which will ultimately bleed it to death. That is equally true of every other form of tribute.

I have in my mind as I write one patch of land, a concrete case, of which I know all the details. Thirty acres of land of an average quality in a purely agricultural district. The true burden of taxation upon the same is, as things now are, an income-tax to begin with upon the rental, although no rent be paid, although the land and the house upon it be in the possession of the tiller. This income-tax, being graduated, may in the case of the small owner be small, but it exists. In the particular case I am considering, as the thirty acres belong to a large property, it comes to some 3s. an acre. The tithe, which is I admit a heavy one, comes to nearly 9s. an acre. The land is already to some extent subsidized by the abolition of agricultural rates, but there is the rate upon the house, a rate of 4s. in the £ upon the supposed rental value. I do not speak of the burden of upkeep in gates and the rest which a certain social standard imposes and which, were a free peasantry in existence, would be greatly lowered at the expense of what are now called "good appearances". The mere money burden of the rates and taxes including tithe is more than the thing will bear. The effect of them upon the small owner is just what it would be upon the urban worker if he were to be asked to pay £15 a year out of his subsistence wage. Quite apart from any question of usurious tribute it is a burden more than the thing will stand.

To these main principles there are two more which I would add: first the necessity of co-operation among the small owners for the purposes of marketing and for the lowering of the costs of production, for instance co-operation in the dairy business. The second is the permission of alienation. The reason I exclude these two from the main principles is because a peasantry once established will solve such problems for itself; co-operation will naturally arise and the restriction of absolute ownership by rules forbidding alienation kills effort; they are a form of servitude. A free peasantry once established will see to itself. Make it unfree by supervision from any form of bureaucracy and the moral motive power will inevitably be maimed.

There is further, a final principle which, while not essential, is operative for good, and it lies immediately to our hand. It is the principle that everything should be done by the artifice of the laws to make it easy for the smaller man to buy land from the richer man and difficult for the larger man to buy land from the smaller man. You must establish what is called upon the Continent "*cadastre*". There must be a register of land (it already exists in practice through the income-tax schedules) and you must establish by a differential tax—the principle of which you can find in the Wyndham Land Act in Ireland—a tendency for the small man to buy from the great and for the great to sell to the small.

Granted such principles underlying your effort, applying that effort to men who are already tilling the land and have an hereditary faculty therein, leaving yourself free to feed into such a system new men hitherto unconnected with the land but capable of being grafted on to an existing peasantry, your peasantry will prosper and grow. It will grow slowly, it will not, for a very long time, become the predominant note in a society already morally ruined by industrialism, but it will form a nucleus of health in such a society.

It is evident from what has been said that any such attempt to re-erect a peasantry in a society where the idea of a peasantry has almost disappeared must be based upon subsidy, that is, upon gift. You have to foster the new growth, and that can only be done at the expense of other forms of wealth surrounding the new growth. If in England, for instance, you abolish the tithe on the small man (keep it by all means upon the large man) someone will have to find the difference. The same is true of taxes and of rates. In other words, you cannot start a new peasantry save at the expense of the diseased society surrounding it; and if you are not prepared to impose that sacrifice your peasantry will never be established. It *must* begin as a social luxury and, like all luxuries, must be extravagantly paid for. What you have to decide is whether it is worth while to the health and the morals of the community that the economic effort should be made.*

***This article concludes Mr. Belloc's series on *The Restoration of Property*. An Editorial Note discussing those of Mr. Belloc's books which bear upon the same subject as well as the literature of Distributism in general will be found on page 122.**

Still Rebels, Still Yankees

DONALD DAVIDSON

AT A meeting of Southern writers in Charleston last fall, Laurence Stallings looked belligerently around him and expressed an ardent preference for a "Balkanized America". "What I like about Charleston", he said, "is that it has resisted Abraham Lincoln's attempts to put the country into Arrow Collars. If the South had won the war, the country would have had lots more colour."

The rebelliousness of Mr. Stallings need not compel us to suspect him of being an unreconstructed Southerner disguised as a man of letters, who is looking for artistic reasons to justify what arms and politics once failed to secure. Discontent with the uniformity of America is common enough; what is not common is the knowledge that this uniformity, a byword ever since James Bryce looked at the American commonwealth through the spectacles of the Gilded Age, is more a myth than a reality.

As a myth, it probably represents the wishful thinking of those who, for their own designs, want America to become uniform. Actually America is not yet uniform; very likely it is less uniform than it once was and far more Balkanized than Mr. Stallings dreams. The unreconstructed Southerners have done their part in keeping it Balkan; but there are unreconstructed Yankees, too, and other unreconstructed Americans of all imaginable sorts, everywhere engaged in preserving their local originality and independence.

The only people who do not know this are the experts who do most of the current talking about American society. They live in a sociological pickle of statistics and progress. They are eternally looking for what they call "social values", but they strangely confine their research to libraries and graduate "projects" at the larger universities. They very studiously avoid the places where social values may be encountered in the flesh. If by accident they stumble upon a living social value, walking visibly about some spot of earth and drawing its nutriment from a tradition embodied in the houses, speech, crafts, music, folklore, and wisdom of an actual people, their rule is to denounce it as an anachronism and to exterminate it without further ado. For them, nothing must grow according to its nature, but only according to laboratory formulae, which are obtained by inspecting the reactions of the most abnormal and depressed specimens of humankind, too weak to protest against sociological vivisection.

But those of us who still believe in the map of the United States know that it marks the residence of some diversified Americans who had better not go unacknowledged. In Vermont, for instance, are people who are still Yankees; and in Georgia, and elsewhere, there are still Rebels. I remember talking with a certain Virginian who watched a Vermont sunset with me, one summer evening. As the sun passed below the distant Adirondacks, we looked at the Green Mountains around us, and at the trim Vermont fields where all the weeds were flowers and all the grass was hay. In the clear detail of the afterglow we saw the forests of spruce and balsam and maple, and spoke of how the very wilderness, in this New England State, had uprightness and order. The woods were as snug and precise as a Yankee kitchen—no ragged edges, no sprawling, nothing out of place. In the clearings the farm-houses were all painted; and the barns were painted, too. The streams were orthodox streams, almost model streams, with water always translucent and stones rounded and picturesquely placed among moss and ferns. They were often called "brooks"—a word that for Southerners existed only on the printed page.

On this land, the Virginian said, the Yankees had looked so intimately and long that, like the man in Hawthorne's story of the Great Stone Face, they had become the image of what they contemplated. The Yankee genius of Vermont was upright, vertical, and no doubt Puritan. Where the landscape itself enforced consistency and order, how could the people concede much virtue to inconsistency and irregularity? The forebears of the Vermont Yankee had once failed to understand how Southerners could be devoted *both* to slavery *and* democracy. That old failure of understanding did not seem queer, or worth more than a passing sigh, to two Southerners who stood looking at sunset upon a land whose gentled wildness suggested the urgent possibility of a well-ordered universe, cut to a discreet Yankee pattern. But the human geography of America had now become a particoloured thing, sprawling across the continent in a crazy-quilt of provinces, or sections, each with its private notion of a universe. No longer, as in the sixties, could the Yankee make bold to set up a general pattern for the entire Union. He had enough to do if he would defend and preserve what was peculiarly his own. In such a purpose of preservation the two Southerners at last could presume to sympathize, even to help if possible. But preservation could not be achieved without recognizing a principle of diversity in American life. Only by such means could one make any sense out of Lamar's famous epigram in his eulogy on Sumner, "My countrymen, know one another and you will love one another"; it ceased to have meaning if America was to be subjugated to the ideal of uniformity, or to the ideal universe that some one section might generate.

But how could the principle of diversity be inculcated? On the negative side, certain false images, the product of legend or propaganda, must somehow be counterbalanced. Regrettably enough, some of the fairest legends caused the greatest embarrassment. To the Virginian I recalled the horror of a good lady from the Middle West, who was motoring from Washington to Richmond. Mount Vernon was all right, she thought; there the legend was safely frozen. But beyond, on the road to Richmond, what had become of all the great mansions she had read about, the cotton fields with Negroes carolling, the old gentlemen in goatees and white vests, sipping mint juleps in the shade? They were not visible. There were only a few scattered shacks and tumbledown barns in miles of impenetrable wilderness that looked for all the world as it must have looked when John Smith first invaded it. If she could have encountered the legend, the lady would have been content. But not seeing it or knowing how to locate it, she was smitten with a housewifely desire to get at this ragged land with a good broom and whisk it into seemliness.

Other sojourners had been anxious to do a far more drastic tidying-up. The Harlan County visitors, the Scottsboro attorneys, the shock troops of Dayton and Gastonia asked no questions about the genius of place. Wherever they went on their missions of social justice, they carried with them a legend of the future, more dangerously abstract than the legend of the past, and sternly demanded that the local arrangements be made to correspond with it, at whatever cost. The only America they knew or cared about was an overgrown urban America, that was forever in process of becoming one laboratory experiment after another.

What could be done about all this? Our answers were shrouded in darkness as we walked back to the log fires and good company of a New England inn. The Virginian, after the fashion of good Southerners who do not want to let anybody know the incertainty of their minds under modern conditions, did not propose any answer. Instead, he told several good stories. They were his courteous and delightful way of saying that he was being pounded between his own unyielding loyalty and the howling respectability of the great world.

If any answer is to be found, if anything positive is to be done, it must surely be through a laborious process of discovering America all over again. When one looks at America, not to see how it does or does not fit the synthetic ideals proposed for its future, but only with the modest purpose of detecting the realities —let us say the social values—that persist in local habitations, he soon realizes that comparisons are more fruitful than condemnations. More specifically, when one has the good fortune to go directly from a summer in Vermont to an autumn and winter in Middle Georgia, as I have recently done, he forms a clear picture of sectional differences. This picture is not in the least favourable to the notion that the diverse America of the Rebels and Yankees is in any immediate danger of being submerged.

If on coming to Vermont I had consulted the modern legend of New England that vaguely haunted my mind, I would have received the iconoclastic shock which our advanced thinkers argue is the first step toward salvation. Had not a New England migrant to the South assured me that his ancestral acres were now inhabited by Montenegrins, who had turned them into a goat farm? Had not the sepulchral Eugene O'Neill and others told tales of the poverty and decadence of New England life? The farms were deserted, it was said; the immigrants and mill-towns had come; the Yankees had left for parts unknown, or, remaining, had become degenerate. Even the loyalty of Robert Frost gave no comfortable assurance, if one were to go by *North of Boston* and the wistful asides in which he put forth the guarded wisdom of a not yet conquered soul. The New England of Whittier and Webster was supposed to be extinct; it had been replaced by Puritan-baiters and F. Scott Fitzgeraldites who drank cocktails and read Proust when not conducting the insurance business of the United States.

But if the Vermont that I saw was in the least representative of New England, this composite picture was a wild detraction. In Vermont, if nowhere else, a New England like that of Whittier and Webster miraculously persisted, a reality capable of reducing a Southerner almost to despairing envy. I could understand what led Walter Hines Page, a quarter of a century ago, to disparage his native North Carolina and fall in love with New England. But the time was past when one needed to disparage or praise in the interest of the America Page dreamed about, for in the nineteen-thirties it seemed impossible of realization, or, where realized, already past saving. To one who did not accept Lincoln's quaint idea that the United States must become "all one thing or all the other", it seemed more than ever true that the unity of America must rest, first of all, on a decent respect for sectional differences.

If Vermont and Georgia could be taken in a broad way to stand for New England and the Deep South, one could easily trace out the most general differences. The Vermont towns, like the Vermont landscape, were swept and garnished, as if the Day of Judgement might at any moment summon them into the presence of the celestial inspector. They looked as if Vermonters lived by the adage "Handsome is as handsome does", and one could reflect that this proverb might well have issued from some collaborative effort of Poor Richard and Jonathan Edwards. The most delightful of Southern towns was almost certain to mix a little squalor with its grandeurs. Here, what a Southerner most particularly noticed was the neatly painted aspect of everything, the absence of ramshackle buildings and litter, the white steeples of churches, the shipshapeness of streets, yards, garages, barber shops, and public buildings. By some special benison of God and the New England conscience, not a billboard had been allowed to sprout between Bennington and the Canadian border. Perhaps by the same double grace, not a weed sprouted, either. All the weeds had turned into ferns and buttercups. Vermont farms were Currier and Ives prints of what good farms ought to look like, with orchards and brooks in exactly the right place and gates that did not need mending. In the background were lakes and mountains where one would put them if he were Aladdin or Wordsworth. It was not surprising to be told that hardly a poison snake, and no poison ivy, existed in the State of Vermont; or that there were excellent trails running the whole length of the Green Mountains, with finger-posts at every wilderness cross-roads, and tin huts, with beds, firewood, and caretaker, atop of the highest peak. A few nagging irregularities of nature, like blackflies and mosquitoes, seemed really blasphemous in a land to which God had given a monopoly of all things good and precise, including, during my sojourn, a most punctual solar eclipse that did not deign to reach totality in less favoured regions. No wonder, with all this beneficence around them, that the Yankees remembered the Mayflower and forgot John Smith, honoured Bunker Hill and neglected King's Mountain. If they could claim such priority in the benevolence of God, their proprietary feeling toward the Revolutionary War, and their almost hereditary claim to the direction of the United States Government were by comparison insignificant appurtenances, theirs as a matter of course and by general presumption.

Although I did not hold very devotedly to the economic determinism of modern historians, it was a temptation to say that the people were a great deal like the land. There was the climate, which put keenness into a Southerner's veins. Summer was short, and one had to make the most of it; winter was severe, and one had to keep shield and buckler perpetually ready against it—in that matter was God benevolent or ruthless? Short summers and cold winters made the Vermont Yankee frugal and careful. He must watch his corners. If he were caught napping, he would perish. So much and no more, was the gift of his seasons; so much and no more, was the rule of his nature. And one had to watch over his neighbour as well as work with him if the general security were not to be imperilled by some outrageous letting down of bars. Very likely, the New England civic conscience derived as much from the imperatives of climate as from the Puritan tradition; the one egged on the other.

No great check had ever been put upon the development of qualities that the Southerner recognized as ineradicably Yankee. History had been as kind to the Yankee as God had been kind. Since Revolutionary times no great sudden change had ever swept over these peaceful towns and this quiet landscape. Industrialism had come slowly and somewhat agreeably upon a people who had the ingenuity to use it and the moral force to make it behave. How could they who thought they knew how to tame the monster realize that he might walk unshackled and ravening elsewhere? The Yankees, indeed, had never tasted defeat. Since Burgoyne's expedition no invader had come upon them to ravage and destroy. They had freed the Negroes, replying "I can" to duty's "Thou must"; but they were fortunately exempt from the results of emancipation, for no Negroes lived among them to acquaint them with the disorder of unashamed and happy dirt. One knew that a slum in New England would be a well-managed slum, and that New Englanders would comprehend Secretary Perkins's horror at the lack of plumbing in unreformed America and her notion of saving the barefoot South by building shoe factories. For in New England humanitarianism was the natural flower of good sense. In a land where everything was so right, it was hard to imagine a perverse land where so much could be so wrong without disturbing either a people's composure or their happiness.

But in the plantation country of Middle Georgia the social values required a different yardstick. The genius of Georgia was stretched out, relaxed and easy, in keeping with the landscape, which required a large and horizontal view of mundane affairs. The Georgian assumed that God would have sense and heart enough to take into consideration, when Judgement Day came around, a good deal besides external and man-made appearances. God was a gentleman, indeed, who would certainly know, without being told, that one was a person, a somebody, doing his best among some rather amazing arrangements that had better not be talked about too much. The climate might or might not predispose the Georgia Rebel to laziness; the fact was, he worked and fretted more than the Yankee knew. But the Rebel idea was never to *seem* to work and fret. You must not let your work ride you, was the saying. In plain truth, you did not need to. The land was bountiful, and the Lord would provide, and in event of the Lord's failure or displeasure, you could always fall back on your kinfolks.

Where the seasons were all mixed up, so that autumn merged into spring without any sharp demarcation, and you might have a dubious summer in the middle of winter, it became almost a point of honour not to worry too much about provision. There was no need to watch corners when something was growing all the time. Almost anything would grow in Middle Georgia, and almost everything did grow, including weeds whose invasions could not possibly be repelled from every roadside and ditch if they were to be kept out of cotton and corn.

The Georgia landscape had a serene repose that lulled a man out of all need of conscience. It was anything but swept and garnished. It could be mild or majestic or genial or savage, depending on what view you got of pines against red earth, or Negro cabins underneath their chinaberry trees, or sedge grass running into gullies and thence to impenetrable swamps, or deserted mansions lost in oak groves and magnolias. Rivers were muddy and at times unrestrained; they overflowed at embarrassing moments. In the pine barrens you might get an impression of desolation and melancholy; but things could grow lushly too, with the overpowering vegetable passion that harrowed the Puritan soul of Amy Lowell, when she visited the Magnolia Gardens at Charleston. But finally, it was a well-tilled country, where you were forever seeing the Negro and his mule against the far horizon, or the peach orchards bursting into an intoxicating pink.

The seasons were full of charms and intimidations. Spring, with its dogwood blossoms and soft airs, might deliver a tornado or a flood; summer, full of grown corn and harvest ease, might turn into dusty drouth. The woods that lured you to enter and gave nuts and flowers for the taking were full of hidden terrors. Sit on a mossy bank without precaution, and in a few hours you might be on fire with chigoe bites. Stoop to pick a flower, and you might find a rattlesnake. Indoors the housewife had to fight cockroaches and flies; outdoors were hawks, polecats, weasels, 'possums, coons, and other varmints to harry the henhouse. Therefore precision, for the Georgian, must rank among the Utopian virtues. If New England encouraged man to believe in an ordered universe, Georgia—and a good deal of the South besides—compelled him to remember that there were snakes in Eden. Nature, so ingratiating and beautiful, which bound the Georgian to his land with a love both possessive and fearful, was a fair but dreadful mistress, unpredictable and uncontrollable as God. The New Englander knew exactly where to find nature harsh and nature yielding, and he could make his arrangements accordingly. But the Georgian never knew. His safest policy was to relax, and he readily developed a great degree of tolerance for irregularity in nature and man. At his lowest level, this quality made him lackadaisical and trifling. The New England Yankee became a perfectionist, who at his worst might turn into a zealot, strangely intolerant even while, as idealist, he argued for tolerance.

History, like God and nature, had been both generous and unkind to Georgia and the South. The

Georgia Rebel must approach his early history through a bloody link of war and reconstruction that was hazy and bygone to the Vermont Yankee. Defeat had possessed him and had rubbed deep into his wounds. Around him were the visible reminders of destruction and humiliation. His land had been ravaged and rebuilt, and he had been told to forget. But he would not and could not forget, and was therefore torn between his loyalty and his awareness that the great world was bored with his not forgetting. He had been rebuked for being inept at administering a newfangled government that he did not understand or like any too well, and in which he had been allowed to participate only by a kind of negligent afterthought. Turning desperately to the industrial civilization against which he had once taken arms, he had played it as a hedge against the problematic future. Though agrarian at heart, he had been forced to wonder whether the ingenious Yankee might not be right after all.

Thus he remembered the faith and hankered after the fleshpots at the same time. But industrialism, declining to be treated as a mere hedge, began Sherman's march to the sea all over again. It piled ugliness upon wreckage and threw the old arrangements out of kilter. The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Kiwanis Club flourished side by side. Mule-wagon and automobile, fundamentalism and liberalism, education and illiteracy, aristocratic pride and backwoods independence disproved the axiom that two bodies cannot occupy the same space. Cities that preserved the finest flavour of the old régime had to be approached over brand-new roads where billboards, tourist camps, filling stations, and factories broke out in a modernistic rash among the water oaks and Spanish moss. And everywhere was the Negro, a cheerful grinning barnacle tucked away in all the tender spots of Southern life, not to be removed without pain, not to be cherished without tragedy. The Georgian, when reproached for his intolerance, told himself that actually nobody outdid him in fond tolerance of the Negro. Lynchings, the work of hotheads and roustabouts, were regrettable; but what did a few lynchings count in the balance against the continual forbearance and solicitude that the Georgian felt he exercised toward these amiable children of cannibals, whose skins by no conceivable act of Congress or educational programme could be changed from black to white. The presence of the Negro, which had its advantages in agriculture and domestic service, made the Georgian's life both comfortable and ramshackle; it gave him devoted servants and social problems, cheap labour and hideous slums, an endless flow of folk-lore and anecdote, and eternal apprehension for the future. But in his own way, the Georgian respected the Negro, as another irregularity, taking a human and personal form, that had somehow to be lived with. He distrusted all ready-made prescriptions for bringing about regularity. In Georgia, life went along horizontally: you never crossed a bridge until you came to it—and maybe not then.

But sociologists not only cross bridges; they build all imaginable kinds of new ones. The picture of America, as sociologically reformed, does not contemplate any great concessions to Yankee uprightness or Rebel relaxation. Indeed, the sociologist, armed with science, is ready to follow reformation with transformation. In the vast inevitable working of the social forces, sectional differences become irrelevant. With a cold smile the sociologist pronounces a death sentence upon Rebel and Yankee alike. Not that they matter very much—but they will have to yield!

When he talks like this, I am perversely compelled to remember the individuals I have seen, Brother Jonathan of Vermont and Cousin Roderick of Georgia, who I cannot imagine as yielding to the puny weapons flourished by our social philosophers. They are local incarnations of the Old Adam. They are the immovable bodies that can furnish the irresistible social forces with an incalculable meeting. They are human beings, undebatably alive; and they are different.

(*To be concluded*)

The First American Novel

TREMAINE MCDOWELL

ON THE 21st day of January in the year 1789, loyal citizens of Massachusetts had unique cause for gratification. At last, they were informed, a novel had been written and published in book form in the United States. Under the challenging heading, FIRST AMERICAN NOVEL, they found in Boston journals this advertisement: "*This day published, price 9s. bound and lettered, and 6s. 8d. stitched in blue paper,* THE POWER OF SYMPATHY: Or, the TRIUMPH OF NATURE. A NOVEL founded in truth." Observant Bostonians knew that, during the decades prior to the Revolutionary War, lack of leisure, poverty of invention, and prejudice against fiction had restrained the colonists from any ventures in novel-writing—that, in fact, the American people had achieved a republic before they were able to produce a single indigenous novel. Then, political independence having been declared, fervent patriots had loudly demanded the instant appearance of native manners, native arts, and even native speech, only to discover that a national culture cannot be created by fiat. Thus it happened that not until 1789 was the American novel born; and thus it happened also that its birth was an event calculated to produce national rejoicing.

And yet *The Power of Sympathy* was met, not with fanfares of patriotic enthusiasm, but with a desperate attempt at suppression. True enough, readers in Boston made no motion to restrict its circulation.

Catching their attention merely as a curiosity, the book stimulated them to no published comment save a debate between representatives of the two sexes. First, a bilious gentleman signing himself "Civil Spy" protested in the *Massachusetts Centinel* that neither title nor subtitle accurately described the contents of the novel. "A young man", wrote Civil Spy, "and a young woman having mutually become fond, because they cannot gratify their desire, she dies; which is very natural for a woman to do. But unfortunately, he kills himself, which is very unnatural for a man to do." Where, demanded the critic, is the triumph of nature? Thereupon a certain "Antonia" appeared as public defender of this "elegant composition", this "chaste and moral performance", this "delicate and pathetic novel". To it, she paid her tribute of tears; over it, she rejoiced that the first American attempt in fiction "might vie with the most sentimental and unexceptional *British* or *Hibernian* story". And on its author she heaped "deserved encomiums" as "a champion of feminine innocence, a promoter of religion and chastity, and a pleasing monitor of inexperienced minds".

It was in the neighbouring town of Dorchester that a remarkable furore promptly arose. There prominent citizens, according to one account of the episode, persuaded the novelist to withdraw the book from circulation and destroy all remaining copies. According to a more probable version of the affair, these same individuals themselves bought and burned all copies of *The Power of Sympathy* on which they could lay hands. In any case, the novel became notorious; old prejudices against novelists were revived; and a precedent for suppressing their work was established.

Leafing through the pages of this first of American novels, the modern reader speculates as to why any attempt was made to suppress it. To him, *The Power of Sympathy* is a harmless little tale. But if he will transport himself to eighteenth-century America, the reader at once realizes how sensational a work lies before him. First of all, it is a novel. Like all early novelists, its author is apologetic in admitting that he has written that dangerous thing, a piece of fiction. And such an admission was indeed damaging in an age when sober minds accepted without question the pronouncement of the president of Yale College: "Between novels and the Bible, there is a great gulf fixed." Not only were novelists themselves convinced of the dangerous effects on all humanity of romance-reading, but they emphasized its peculiarly disastrous influence on young females. That romances are often pernicious is therefore confessed in the preface to *The Power of Sympathy* and reiterated in the narrative. Therein a devout clergyman protests, in sound eighteenth-century fashion, that a female who imbibes her ideas of the world from fiction will find only disappointment in actual life: "Unsuspicious of deceit, she is easily deceived—from the purity of her thoughts, she trusts the faith of mankind, until experience convinces her of her errour." To point this sad moral, the distressing case of a daughter of New England is adduced, who, the reader is asked to believe, came to a dishonoured and untimely grave through extensive reading of romances. It was only natural, then, that fathers and husbands particularly frowned upon action as "unfit to form the minds of women, of friends, or of wives", and that novels were commonly published under the protecting cloak of anonymity. But even the most ardent Puritan-baiter will hardly contend, in the absence of any external evidence to support him, that *The Power of Sympathy* was put on the bonfire solely because it was a novel.

Such an explanation of the fate of the book becomes even more improbable when the reader observes the skill with which the contemporary passion for didacticism is here gratified. First, an eloquent dedication to "the Young Ladies of Columbia" announces that the novel is "intended to represent the specious CAUSES, and to expose the fatal CONSEQUENCES of SEDUCTION; to inspire the FEMALE MIND with a principle of SELF-COMPLACENCY and to promote the ECONOMY OF HUMAN LIFE". Then, to attain these admirable ends, the novelist methodically recounts the tragedies of numerous unwary females betrayed by perfidious lovers, and aims sober exhortations at susceptible feminine readers. The gist of these harangues appears in ten painful lines:

> With thee, SEDUCTION! are ally'd
> HORROUR, DESPAIR and SUICIDE.
> You wound–but the DEVOTED heart
> Feels not alone–the poignant smart:
> You wound–th' electrick pain extends
> To fathers, mothers, sisters, friends.
> MURDER may yet delight in blood,
> And deluge round the crimson flood;
> But sure his merits rank above
> Who murders in the mask of love.

If ever a novel bid for the approval of the didactically minded in eighteenth-century America, that novel was *The Power of Sympathy*.

Its suppression, then, must have been occasioned by some extreme offence against decorum. May it have been the distressing frequency with which "moving histories of female frailty" are narrated in its pages, and the melodramatic fashion in which such tragedies conclude? Martin seduces Ophelia—she commits suicide. Williams abducts Fidelia—she, her mother, her lover, and her kidnapper are united in death. A mysterious villain betrays Elizabeth—she and her infant lie side by side in the churchyard. The elder Harrington in his rash youth seduces Maria. Long years thereafter, he meets Harriott, the blushing female whom his son is about to marry. She, alas, is the image of the wronged Maria; young Harrington has all but married his half-sister! Acutely disappointed to find a brother where she looked for a husband, the amorous Harriott exclaims: "O! I sink, I die, when I reflect—when I find in my *Harrington* a brother—I am penetrated with inexpressible grief—I experience uncommon sensations —I start with horrour at the idea of incest—of ruin—of perdition." And yet she ambiguously adds: "How I do lament this fatal discovery!" At length, she goes mad and dies of grief. Thereupon young Harrington, equally disappointed, reads *The Sorrows of Werther* and meditates suicide. "I must go," he cries. "Yet the idea chills me—I am frozen with horrours—cold damps hang on my trembling body—My soul is filled with a thousand troubled sensations—I must depart—It must be so—My love for thee, *O Harriott*! is dearer than life—Thou hast first set out—and I am to follow." At last he shoots himself in the head, not pausing to explain whether he pursues Harriott as lover or as brother. Might not these vivid episodes of sin and sorrow have been too hardy a diet for pious readers in Dorchester? But no—the prudery of the nineteenth century had not yet replaced the frankness of the eighteenth; and no novel was then denied an audience because it demonstrated, with appalling adequacy, the "fatal consequences of seduction".

Another dangerous aspect of *The Power of Sympathy* was its advocacy of that much-debated doctrine, the gospel of sensibility. Fathers and husbands could not be expected to agree with the novelist that the chief end of existence lies in the cultivation of extreme delicacy of emotion. And yet *The Power of Sympathy* repeatedly champions sensibility and encourages its readers to enjoy "the real deliciousness of tears". Thus its pages are flooded with "large drops of sorrow" and "dews of sympathy", with "glittering globes of chrystal" and "pellucid drops of humanity". In such a humid atmosphere, the emotions of its characters are continually agitated and its unhappy females are repeatedly deprived of speech and even of recollection, their "mental progress is stopped", and their "seats of reason become vacant". (No cast of characters, it should be observed, was then complete without its "fair maniac".) Nor is it surprising that accumulated sorrows should at last drive both hero and heroine to escape the operations of their heated emotions in the cool serenity of the grave. Frowned upon by the rational, this same sensibility was to linger on for generations in American literature, weakening the romances of Cooper and watering the poems of Bryant, of Longfellow, and even of Poe.

Serious indeed are these blemishes in the unfortunate book: it is, shamefacedly and yet undeniably, a novel; it lays open to youthful eyes shocking scenes of sin and death; it commends to the females of America that pervasive but destructive doctrine, sensibility. Yet, as has been indicated, these deep flaws were not in themselves sufficient to mark *The Power of Sympathy* for destruction. The author's final and inexcusable offence is his devotion to a theory upon which early novelists clung as their only hope of salvation. This was the belief that the great gulf between a novel and the Bible may be bridged if the former is based, not on fancy, but on fact. Thus early novelists cautiously described their work as "Founded on Incidents in Real Life", "A Tale of Truth", and "Founded on Facts". And disaster overwhelmed *The Power of Sympathy* because it is all too literally "founded in truth". The relatives of the historical Elizabeth Whitman of Hartford made no complaint because her fall was here recorded; the citizens of New England whose authentic sorrows were recounted in the tale of Fidelia made no protest; the Massachusetts families on whose indiscretions were based the tale of the Harringtons, Maria, and Harriott made no remonstrance. But the seduction of Ophelia contained too much truth to be palatable.

All Dorchester recognized that Martin, the seducer in *The Power of Sympathy*, was their townsman, Perez Morton, born in Massachusetts in 1751, graduated from Harvard in 1771, chosen a member of the Committee of Safety in 1775, and later elected speaker of the house and attorney-general in his native state. Mrs. Martin of the novel was obviously Sarah Apthorp Morton, born in Massachusetts in 1759, contributor of verse to the *Massachusetts Magazine* under the pen name of "Philenia", and author of two long poems, *Ouabi: or the Virtues of Nature* (1790) and *Beacon Hill* (1797). And the fictitious Ophelia was Frances Theodora Apthorp, sister of Sarah. In 1788, not long after the marriage of Sarah Apthorp and Perez Morton at Dorchester, Frances was seduced by her brother-in-law, Perez, as recorded by the novelist. When this event became known, the victim, called to an informal trial before her relatives, committed suicide. The families involved, apparently to forestall public action, then asked John Adams and James Bowdoin to conduct a private investigation; and Morton was cleared of all responsibility for the death of Frances. When this notorious scandal was revived by *The Power of Sympathy*, these were the families who did their utmost to check its circulation; and it was their activity in 1789 which makes the first American novel an exceedingly rare book today.

With understandable discretion, this provocative work was published anonymously, as from the pen of "A Lady of Massachusetts". During the last fifty years, historians have most ungallantly, almost libelously, identified the lady as "Philenia"—that is to say, as Mrs. Sarah Morton, unhappy wife of Perez and sister of Frances. Fortunately, Mr. Milton Ellis of the University of Maine has recently cleared Mrs. Morton of this unsavoury imputation, and has demonstrated that she had no part in publicizing her husband's infidelity. In her stead, Mr. Ellis proposes, as author of the first American novel, a neighbour of the Mortons, one William Hill Brown. But the reader is less interested in the validity of Brown's claim to a dubious distinction than in the vindication of "Philenia".

Stilted, inept, at times absurd, *The Power of Sympathy* is nevertheless a remarkably accurate prophecy and epitome of early fiction in the United States. Here, in brief, are exemplified the characteristics of the tearful tales which were to charm many generations of sentimental Americans. Apologetic, didactic, emotional, melodramatic–such was to be native fiction for a half-century, and such was this book, its first exemplar. Truly, in *The Power of Sympathy* the American novel was born.

The Ideas of Wyndham Lewis

Part II

GEOFFREY STONE

FOLLOWING *Time and Western Man* Mr. Lewis published a book of short stories and a novel; after these came *Paleface* (1929), then another novel, and in rapid succession *Hitler*, *The Diabolical Principle*, and *The Doom of Youth. Hitler* we shall consider last because it throws some light on the positive side of Mr. Lewis's position.

Paleface examines another aspect of the technique being employed for the regimentation of the masses. Mr. Lewis finds the colour line is suffering obliteration by being, apparently, accentuated. At the root of the matter lies a "moral situation", that is, humanitarian concern with the welfare of subjugated peoples and races:

> Historically, the mischief that resides in unbridled moral righteousness can be described as follows.—Having wiped out or subjugated all the peoples who had not had the advantages of a christian training in gentleness, humility and other-worldliness, the puritan Palefaces of America and Europe naturally were very contrite and tried to make up for it to those who were left. Quantities of edifying books . . . were produced, pointing out what a beast the Paleface was.

The result of this is that the white man has lost his sense of superiority. There was a time when the "lady" in "char-lady" indicated that, no matter how low the woman's place in the social scale, in the racial scale she still could claim a certain altitude: no Negress, even though she was a Zulu queen, was called a lady. But

> step by step the sensation that he was dealing with a being of a lower order was bound to be wormed or beaten out of the average White, for the simple reason that the average White has the same master as the average Black; and although that master's skin is more or less white, he is not a man of sentiment . . . what interests him is what he has to pay the hands he employs, naturally, and not their colour. . . . there is no other top-dog feeling either based on tribal or national self-feeling, or prestige of skin, which can survive in the heart of a wage-slave, in touch with men technically of "inferior" races, in the same situation as himself, competing with him, when no favour of an artificial sort, but indeed rather the contrary, is extended him.

It is as a champion of the white race that Mr. Lewis comes forward, since, in his opinion, the literature of the day is heavily burdened with propaganda declaring the white inferior to his coloured brother. So far as the Negro is concerned, Mr. Lewis thinks this nonsense. While, once given the opportunities, there is no reason why the Negro should not "produce distinguished philosophers, men of science, and remarkable poets, in profusion", Mr. Lewis objects to "talking about the 'cultural' gifts of the Negro to the White up-to-date, and as already handed over". All that the Negro has contributed to white civilization is jazz and African sculpture, both of which have aided nothing but the hurried march toward primitivism so manifest in all the arts. ". . . all that the 'Afroamerican' has succeeded in supplying is the aesthetic medium of a sort of frantic proletarian sub-conscious, which is the very negation of those far greater arts, for instance, of other more celebrated 'Coloured' races, such as the Chinese or the Hindu."

Two of the most generous contributors to the white inferiority complex are D. H. Lawrence and Sherwood Anderson. Both of them are romanticists. Mr. Anderson "looks a little like Strindberg softened in the prosperous optimistic air of America, and brought up in the shadow of Whitman", and Lawrence is "a much more complete and much more up-to-date Anderson". In place of reverencing Lawrence's dark god Mr. Lewis would offer homage to the "White Daimon", who is "a marvellous force, who has manifested himself on many occasions, and often given us evidence of his magical powers".

One of the chief ideas which Mr. Lewis sees as motivating Lawrence is found piquantly stated in a sentence of that author: "The consciousness of one branch of humanity is the annihilation of another branch." Lawrence of course advises us to adopt an alien consciousness, in the present case that of the Hopi Indian, whose thoughts come "from the consciousness in the abdomen". This plainly is a plea for the mindlessness which we saw as so fashionable in *Time and Western Man*. Lawrence's admiration of the Indian proceeds from "the anti-conceptualist, anti-intellectual, anti-pictorial point of view in philosophy", and partakes of the same musical quality as Herr Spengler's thought. Lawrence is further in agreement with his time in his "glorification of the Feminine principle" and in his praise of experience that "is generic, non-individual"—the latter stamping him as a "natural communist". "The motif of the 'child-cult' . . . is echoed, and indeed screamed, wept, and bellowed, throughout *Sons and Lovers*." Mr. Lewis quotes Lawrence at great length, proving the extent to which he is concerned with the impassable chasm between the races and proving his admiration for the more primitive side of the chasm—and always this primitive side partakes of the sensationalist, flux-ridden nature observed in contemporary metaphysics. His admiration of the primitive side flows out of the romantic inability to see clearly, since "most Aztecs are probably bored with being Aztecs. . . . the average Hopi, like the average cat, is rather negatively admirable and exceedingly mechanical". The influence of the machine age is evident in the worship of mechanical persons. Lawrence offers us a choice between the life of the abdomen and the life of the cerebrum, and he never fails to add that to the abdominal thinker the cerebral one appears impotent, pale, and not a little silly.

Mr. Anderson, too, thinks that the pale man appears not a little silly to the coloured one, and he hears all about him dark laughter. Of Mr. Anderson Mr. Lewis says that "the 'brown mysticism' of Gaugin's dusky mistresses he wishes to transport into the Mississippi, and create a *Noa-Noa* upon its flood. And Niggerland shall henceforth be their Pacific, for those inland populations that have never seen the sea, and each man be a Gaugin in his own back-yard". The notions which reside in Mr. Anderson's works are so few and so often repeated that they need no more than mention here. He sees the white, much as Lawrence does, as frustrated and unhappy, burdened with his intellect and the civilization it has created; the black he sees as carefree and happy, an elemental creature hindered by nothing like a white mind. The head which wears the crown lies uneasy but the uncrowned and fuzzy head, to imitate Mr. Lewis, is laughing itself off at the crowned one. If superiority is in any way indicated by the ability to find a happy mode of life (though Mr. Anderson and Lawrence see in the finding no effort), it clearly follows who is the better man, the black or the white.

II

The Diabolical Principle (1931) carries on the inquiry into the politicization of art—which in this case appears in the rather startling guise of Satanism. Mr. Lewis's essay is a gloss on various pieces appearing in the expatriate magazine *transition.* These pieces he finds marked by nihilism, and nihilism is an attitude of the romantic mind. The romanticism of the *transition* group (they admitted it in a manifesto, with the qualification that it was "new") "is not new: it is a return to the feverish 'diabolism' that flourished in the middle of the last century in France, and which reached England in the 'nineties,' with Oscar Wilde and Beardsley as its principal exponents". Mr. Lewis quotes some passages from *The Lay of Maldoror* (translated in *transition*) of Isadore de Lautréamont, "a kind of happy mixture of the Marquis de Sade and Frederick Nietzsche, but without remarkable talent". Lautréamont is of course not a contemporary (he flourished at the time of the Communes) but the fact that so advanced a review as *transition* should seek to revive him throws much light on modern thinking. "His 'lays' are full of the juiciest machinery of inverted dope-diabolics; wild animals drag naked snow-white virgins across moonlit mountains, tearing their tender flesh upon the jagged rocks and leaving a trail of blood." His work "is characterized by a spirit of demented hatred of other men, and an obsessional attachment to apocalyptic images of horror and destruction".

It is in this "spirit of demented hatred of other men" that the political element enters: "In order to persuade a man to join a revolutionary organization the quickest method, practice has shown, is to pump him full of *hatred* for everybody and everything in sight." "This vein of rage and hatred against mankind is an essential ingredient in all 'nihilism,' and therefore in all 'new romanticism.' " Naturally the methods used for arousing the hatred of the mob and the hatred of the intellectual–to whom *transition* addressed itself–are different; "with the 'intellectual' it is much more his *vanity* than anything else that you must drive for and secure". As a consequence the intellectual is instructed to look upon himself as one apart, to regard the majority of people with great disgust, and to cultivate an attitude of "self-defensive hostility". On similar lines we have the fostering of drug-taking and homosexuality, both of which incline the addict to view himself as separated from other men, making it easier to arouse his hatred and then force him into a condition wherein all men are alike. The road to misanthropy is made more attractive by being presented as the path of sin on which the traveller is invited to partake of all the evil sweets that intrigued the celebrants of the *messe noire*. The diabolical principle proposes "a mystical revolution . . . against a spiritual Power, to match the other revolutions of a more prosaic type against Capitalism or Kingship".

All this diablerie is also Philistinism. To understand why this is so it is necessary to understand Mr. Lewis's distinction between pure revolution and political revolution. Political revolution we have been dealing with; pure revolution is the radical aspect of any great work of art or scientific discovery—Aristotle, for instance, might be called a revolutionary. "The merely political revolutionary is . . . an *interpreter* only of a creative mind. And he is, of course, very often, a very bad and corrupt interpreter; often he is a startlingly vulgar, peculiarly unscrupulous and self-seeking one." ". . . Communism is, as its name implies, a gospel of the Average: and . . . the 'average-sensual' communist—or the 'average-sensual' super-realist or transitionist—is as a rule not much of an artist . . . he is seldom an inventive person at all . . . in the nature of things he is not a 'philosophic' intelligence but—how shall I express it?—it is to be feared just a 'bourgeois' after all!" Any state of mind which values art only in so far as it can compete with the most material things of life is plainly Philistinism.

Included with *The Diabolical Principle* is *The Dithyrambic Spectator*, *An Essay on the Origins and Survivals of Art*. After considering the conditions which enabled the Egyptian sculptor to produce work of a high order, Mr. Lewis turns to Jane Harrison's *Ancient Art and Ritual*, which traces the beginning of the Attic stage to the dithyrambs of the Dionysaic festivals. Miss Harrison emphasizes the communal nature of early art, a result of its being primarily religious ritual. "To-day we have started the return journey *back* to ritual, Miss Harrison tells us . . . back to the excited crowd. In her *finale* ACTION is uppermost once more—'Thanks be to God.' " Just how this applies to the trends of the day we can see:

> Our art is "the art of a stage, without actors; a scene which is all background, all suggestion". . . . It is science, according to Miss Harrison, that has "given us back a world-soul". . . . Science stands for the theory of *collective* life, art for the doctrine of individual life. . . . Science is for the dithyrambic dance: art is for the aloof perfection of the Attic stage . . . . the full blind collective ecstasy is not far off when this translation of the *spectators* into *amateurs* has been effected.

III

The class war, or wars, receives further attention in *The Doom of Youth* (1932). In proportion as it grows more complex, the tendency of industrial civilization is to make the existence of the average individual more simple; he needs to know less and less and, so far as variety of action is concerned, to do less and less. His value as an individual is less; he can easily be replaced. Feminism, we saw, reduced the wages of the worker, but he still claims money on the score of his age and the possession of a family—both of which really make him a less efficient labourer. To do away with these exorbitant claims an attack on age is being launched. By extensive quotation from the popular press Mr. Lewis shows that there is an enormous propaganda under way to exalt youth at the expense of age, to make it appear that youth is the one condition which bestows any worth on the person in an industrial civilization. "As a humble cog in the machinery of Big Business your *only* value is that you are fresh—and of course, as a consequence, *cheap*." It must be made clear to the masses that the elderly person (the person over thirty) is a defective part of the huge machine and, by the standard of mechanical competence, is to be discarded, not pampered with a higher income and respect for seniority. To gain this end youth is being politicized; the peculiar attributes of youth are being applauded all beyond their true worth; the older person is being made to feel that not only is he incompetent but also a menace, something evil *per se*; and the masculine ideal is being attacked.

But youth, like the living gods of the Aztecs, is worshipped only to be slain, for the end of the youth movement is to divest youth of freedom and utilize it for fuel to run the industrial machine. Where swiftness and increasing production are demanded, it is too expensive to allow anyone but the most privileged the luxury of spending twenty years in growing up; and the majority of workers can be employed very early in a system where youthful energy and little more is required of all but the leaders. The end envisaged is the reduction of the average span of life to perhaps thirty years, ten to fifteen of which are to be spent in serving those who raised the youth ideal. Youth is to be abolished. Obviously, even the machine which tends the machines does not run itself: "The long white beard will be the supreme token that the person possessing it belongs to the ruling-class—that he is a member of that super-class who do not die, like dogs, after ten years of active life."

IV

Hitlerism, says Mr. Lewis in his book titled after the founder of the Nazis–it is to be noted that the book was written in 1930, when Hitler's name was only beginning to be known outside Germany–"is rather *a person* than *a doctrine*", and this is because Hitler is an entirely representative German–"you get in him . . . the core of the teutonic character". Hitler's typical nature explains the anti-Semitism of his party. "Whether socialist or monarchist, the German inherits this very powerful prejudice: he identifies the Jew with everything that is inimical to the society to which he belongs–the political and cultural system of the Aryan world." And for the same reason Hitler is a "Man of Peace"; the common man, as Mr. Lewis has often asserted, is not particularly anxious to engage in war unless he is driven to it by propaganda. "Hitler is *not* a straight-forward, simple, fire-eating, sabre-rattling, moustachioed puppet at all. I do not think that if Hitler had his way he would bring the fire and the sword across otherwise peaceful frontiers." As an instance of this peaceful character Mr. Lewis cites the fact that, although equipped with what amounts to a good-sized army, Hitler has not used his *Sturmabteilung* for terroristic purposes but only to insure himself and his followers against attack by rival parties. That the *Sturmabteilung* might be used to maintain in power a Hitler dictatorship is another matter.

Against the notion of class–that great instrument of both Communist and Capitalist in their endeavour to enslave the masses–Hitler opposes the notion of race, with the statement that "all that is not race in this world is dross". Mr. Lewis is no advocate of racial imperialism, but he thinks that if we must take sides (and we are everywhere being urged to take sides) we had better do it on a basis of race than on a basis of class, for an appeal to race will produce more true unification than one to class. This doctrine of the *Blutsgefühl* "should provide us with a passionate *exclusiveness*, with a homogeneous social framework, within the brotherly bounds of which we could live secure from alien interference, and so proceed with our work and with our pleasures, whatever they may be". In *Paleface* he spoke of the inferiority complex which is being saddled on the Western white, and in Hitler's theories he sees some hope of its being raised. "But can we any longer deny that the German belief in the necessity of a Central, Western, unified culture, and the necessity of an acuter and more jingo, if you like, race-consciousness on the part of all White Western Peoples, has something to be said for it?"

> *This is not a sentimental issue at all.* Do not allow yourself to be hoodwinked into believing that by its opponents. On the contrary, it is a severely practical one. The political and economic structure of Western Europe and of America are in a state of violent disequilibrium. Something has to be done of a most radical sort, very rapidly indeed, it seems. And I suggest that the sort of solution suggested in Hitlerism is not entirely to be despised, though not necessarily to be swallowed whole.

The assertion of racial superiority, or at least a strong pride in the race of which one is a member (and we of the Western world are white and more or less "Aryan"), is a political necessity if we are to preserve that which we may most justly take pride in—our

Western culture, the great traditions, ignored though they are today, to which we can point as our racial heritage.

On Hitlerist economics Mr. Lewis is not very clarifying, but that is to be expected, for he outdoes even Mr. Eliot in denying any knowledge whatsoever of economics. But what attracts him in Hitler's economic theories is, strangely enough, what he might find in even more congenial form in the writings of Hilaire Belloc and G. K. Chesterton—for whom he expresses the most decided dislike, based apparently on a superficial acquaintance. He has this to say of Hitler's economics:

> . . . the heart of the economic doctrine of the National-socialist—namely, the absolute distinction between concrete and *productive* capital (great or small) upon the one hand, and Loan-capital (as the Hitlerist calls it) on the other. The arch-enemy is not *Das Kapital*, pure and simple, as with Marx, but *Das Leihkapital*, or Loan-capital. Property, up to some specified, reasonable, amount—the Hitlerist has no objection to. If you own a cow, that is all right. But if you have lent another money with which to buy a cow (probably at crushing interest-rates, and upon such terms as preclude the cow ever paying, as a cow, or of being of any use to anybody except the loaner), and if you make a habit of lending people money to buy objects like cows—or cars, or cart-horses—that is quite another matter.

Mr. Lewis then goes on to say that Hitler is perhaps a "Credit-crank", and that he himself, were he not careful, might become one also. One is rather inclined to agree with him there, for he seems to think it possible that "the constantly-perfected technique of industry" might be so utilized as to usher in an age of unprecedented wealth, equally distributed, if only credit were "released".

It would seem that Mr. Lewis offers his exposition of Hitlerism because he sees in it a movement analogous to ones which might be established in England and America to combat the tendencies he has exposed and examined in his other works: Communism and patriarchal Capitalism. In *The Art of Being Ruled* he saw a world state under either of these systems (and essentially they are the same) as inevitable. He expressed no great regret at this; the mass of people, he thought, "wish to be *automata*: they wish to be *conventional*: they hate you teaching them or forcing them into 'freedom': they wish to be obedient, hard-working machines, as near dead as possible—as near dead (feelingless and thoughtless) as they can get, without actually dying"; and in the new state he thought the artist would be free to pursue his craft without interference from propaganda. That such a dull and material civilization would eliminate both incentive and audience for the artist unless he were employed by propaganda for its maintenance is too obvious to dilate upon. In *Time and Western Man* he modified this view by saying that "people should be compelled to be freer and more 'individualistic' than they naturally desire to be, rather than their native unfreedom and instinct toward slavery should be encouraged and organized". In his sympathy for the Distributist aspects of Hitler's economics we see him discarding some of his hatred of the small man. Finally, in the second number of *The Enemy* he announced "I have come to believe that Russian Communism not only should not, but cannot, become the creed of the Western peoples", although

> . . . much that the communist party advocates, where it advocates radical change in our habits, I am . . . in agreement with. But I believe that all this should be taken out of their hands—all that is not specifically *communist* and asiatic—and placed entirely in the hands of disinterested leaders of our race and traditions; and all that is alien to our traditions and race cut away from it, and handed back to Asia.

Since *The Doom of Youth*, Mr. Lewis has issued two other critical works, both pamphlets. The first, *A Tip from the Augean Stable* (1932), takes to task the reviewers and publishers of London for the venality of their ways. The second, *The Old Gang and the New Gang* (1933), was issued after the publishers were forced to withdraw *The Doom of Youth* and enlarges on some of the arguments of that book. Mr. Lewis analyzes the current view that contemporary affairs are as bad as they are because of the ineptitude of the "older generation" and the "Youth-hysterics" which would change things for the better by putting youth in the saddle. He traces the growth of the attitude from the early war poems of Siegfried Sassoon to *All Quiet on the Western Front*, as well as in the mobilization of adolescence by the post-war revolutionaries. The list of Mr. Lewis's critical works is completed with two essays included in his volume of short stories, *The Wild Body*, an essay accompanying the revised version of *Enemy of the Stars*, and a pamphlet called *Satire and Fiction*. All these are explanatory of the author's work in fiction and are better discussed in connection with that side of his work.

In closing we might consider a common objection against Mr. Lewis's methods, which this survey may have suggested. We can use T. S. Eliot's words: "Mr. Wyndham Lewis, the most brilliant journalist of my generation (in addition to his other gifts), often squanders his genius for invective upon objects which to everyone but himself seem unworthy of his artillery, and arrays howitzers against card houses. . . ." Even if we grant only a partial truth to Mr. Lewis's statements about society today, what truth we do grant them should explain the rightness of his attacks on what at first glance often seem the most trivial persons and phenomena: the objects of his assaults are all manifestations of the forces which he sees as working for the destruction of Western civilization. In objecting to the illustrations that he uses for his theories, the people whose works he examines, and all on which he pours the phials of his wrath, we should take care, as he warns us, not to be guilty of the "obtuseness that sees in the newspaper, cinema, or wireless only one of the innocent non-political distractions of mankind". For whether he writes of Anita Loos or James Joyce, of Bloomsbury or Athens, of the pages of *transition* or the faculties of Manchester, Harvard, and the Collège de France, Wyndham Lewis attacks, with the sharp exhilaration of his intellectual subtlety and the freshness of his artist's sensibility, the most serious issues of our time, bringing to their elucidation a rhetoric of incomparable range and vigour, a wit that would have stood high even in a far wittier age, and moral courage and fervour to match them.

REVIEWS

Romantic Expansiveness: A Case History

As is the case with most men who manage to combine an unbounded imagination with wealth and power, there was not one Cecil Rhodes but many. There was the traditional Rhodes of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article, written by the woman who had been his confidential liaison agent in London during the conspiracy which preceded the Jameson Raid: the Rhodes who "taught the world a new chapter in the romance of wealth" and was "one of the makers of the British Empire". There was the Rhodes of the English Liberal critics of his period: the "privateer"; the "evil genius of South Africa". There was the Rhodes of President Kruger: "That young man will give me trouble." And there was the Rhodes of his own imagination: in his expansive moments, the man who was sacrificing health and wealth to a dream of permanent peace for humanity; in his periods of cynicism, the "valuable instrument for the cheap extension of Empire".

Mrs. Millin's Rhodes* is all of these and more. She has produced one of the most interesting biographies of a recently dead figure to appear in many years: a book that is written with an art that covers the painstaking that has gone into it, full of fascinating documents and quotations from eye-witnesses, a book in which a woman who loves Africa has come together with a man who loved Africa as the two may never come together again. Since Mrs. Millin is a novelist, her chief interest is in the natural drama which the story of Rhodes's life forms: born the son of an English country pastor; sent to Natal as a tubercular at seventeen; making £100 a week from his own diamond claim at Kimberley a year later; signing at thirty-four the largest check that had theretofore been drawn—£5,338,650; censured ten years later by Parliament "for being simultaneously a Prime Minister in one country, a Chartered ruler in a second, and a conspirator in a third"; dying at forty-eight, a multi-millionaire, because, as Mrs. Millin says, "he could not even get a little air to breathe". But wherever her interest lies, from her book there emerges the Rhodes whose significance his contemporaries could not clearly see: the Rhodes who was the very archtype of romantic expansiveness, as articulate an example as we shall ever witness of the nineteenth-century imperialist mind.

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* CECIL RHODES *by Sarah Gertrude Millin* (HARPERS. 449 pp. $3.75).

To begin with, he had the imperialist's belief in the chosen nature of his people. With Rhodes it sprang from popular Darwinism (he was just six years old when *The Origin of Species* appeared), and it gave him the object his expansive nature required. This, says Mrs. Millin, is how his mind worked:

> He began by assuming that there was a fifty-per-cent chance a God existed.
>
> Take it a God did exist.
>
> What would this God want of man?
>
> It was a question Rhodes was prepared to answer. God would want man not only to look like him, but to act like him. Man, therefore, had to find out what God was doing, and do the same.

What was God doing? Darwin had said it. God was perfecting the race through natural selection and the weeding out of the unfit. It merely remained for man to follow this lead and God's will was done.

The eyes of Rhodes were after God. He looked to see what, in this process of selection and elimination, God had achieved. Which, among all the peoples, had he brought to flower?

With all modesty, Rhodes could not help admitting that it was the English-speaking peoples that followed the highest ideal of Justice, Liberty, and Peace; the people of Great Britain, her dominions, and America.

The conclusion was clear. If Rhodes wished to please and follow God, he had, whatever way he could, to promote the unity and extend the influence of the English-speaking race.

To himself, personally, he allotted the task of Africa.

Rhodes was twenty-four when this great light burst upon him, and from that time forward it was the only moral law he knew. Because it was a law of expansiveness, knowing no restraint, in the end it transformed the life of this man of many admirable qualities—vigour, intelligence, courage—into a life of almost unbelievable excess. At the time, it permitted him to write to a friend: "I contend that we [the English] are the greatest race in the world, and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race." (He was now dedicating his life, he added more specifically, to working "for the furtherance of the British Empire, for the bringing of the whole civilized world under British rule, for the recovery of the United States, for the making of the Anglo-Saxon race into one Empire".) It led him to the belief that money could do anything, that money was the "lever for raising mankind", and to attempt to buy or bribe his way through any obstacle. (To Parnell, who complained that the priests were against him, Rhodes said: "Can't you square the Pope?") It led him, as it has led other expansive temperaments in more recent years, to an orgy of amalgamations, ever larger and larger, until finally the greatest of them—the Chartered Company of Rhodesia—proved its own excessiveness by declaring, after thirty years of operation and the expenditure of some £5,000,000 of capital, a ridiculous first dividend of sixpence a share. It led him to ignore the humanity of a Lobengula, who for all his savagery yet could not understand how a *people* could be bought, and to look upon the Negro merely as an obstacle that the white man in Africa was bound to overcome. ("Some honourable members", he cried when he was arguing in the Cape Parliament for the seizure of Bechuanaland, "may say that this is immorality. . . . Now I have not these scruples. . . .") It led him to see no virtue in the settled rural society of the Dutch republics, and to feel that since the world was ever expanding, ever progressing, President Kruger was merely being stupid in standing in the way. And it led him to such a supreme confidence in his own mission and his own omnipotence (". . . It is not self-glorification I desire . . . but to live to register my patent for the benefit of those who . . . are the greatest people the world has ever seen") that he never recovered from the disgrace that followed the Jameson Raid, and died a disappointed man.

The second half of the nineteenth century was the heyday not alone of capitalist imperialism, but of that terrible delusion of racial superiority growing out of the success of certain nations in its pursuit. It was an age prolific in what Babbitt called "efficient megalomaniacs", who might pursue wealth and power for their own sakes, or, like Cecil Rhodes, pursue them in the name of some diseased ideal. We are at just the right distance from Rhodes (he died in 1902) to see him clearly as the type of that age, the typical sower of the whirlwinds which we still are reaping. His life is a case history that brings home to us the fact that the disease of spirit from which he suffered is still infecting the world in which we live today; and Mrs. Millin, whatever her original intention, has done us the service of presenting it both vividly and well.

MARVIN MC CORD LOWES

Mr. Ford and American Fiction

THE patron saint of half the American fiction writers alive, Mr. Ford Madox Ford, has just written an autobiography which he prefers to call a novel: "I have tried then to write a novel drawing my material from my own literary age," he says, in the prefatory letter to *It Was the Nightingale**. He goes on to say that he has employed every wile known to him as a novelist; and it is true that the book is skilful beyond anything we are accustomed to find among autobiographies. This makes it even more engrossing than we might have expected from its material—the story of Mr. Ford's time of trial (martyrdom would hardly be too strong a word) in England after the close of the War, when he was denied a passport to France, and forbidden to make his living by his pen; through a pastoral interlude in Sussex; back to France again, with the idea of the Tietjens novels gathering like an inspired storm; and finally the history of the establishment and dissolution of the *transatlantic review.* No one could read this book without realizing how intensely in earnest Mr. Ford is about encouraging art in all its forms, but particularly in the form of writing. He has fought the fight handicapped by sickness, poverty, misunderstanding, obtuseness, and downright cruelty, and a legion of young writers call his name blessed. There are plenty of critics today who deny that Mr. Ford can be called an artist in his own right; it is difficult to see how they could continue in their denial after reading this book. He has announced his intentions and the limitations under which he chooses to work, and has produced a unique record of a literary period and his own position in it.

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* IT WAS THE NIGHTINGALE *by Ford Madox Ford* (LIPPINCOTT. 382 pp. $3.00).

One reader will treasure the book for its anecdotes: of Joyce and Proust, Pound, Belloc, Galsworthy, Conrad, Hemingway, Frank Harris, A. E. Coppard, and scores of others. They are the best of anecdotes, as illuminating as they are amusing. They are so extremely neat often that it is in them, if anywhere, that we may rather dubiously suspect the novelist's license. But they have the ring of truth about them; if they are not quite literally true they *should* be true.

Another reader will learn much from it of the way of an author with his subject: "I may—and quite frequently do—plan out every scene, sometimes even every conversation, in a novel before I sit down to write it. But unless I know the history back to the remotest times of any place of which I am going to write I cannot begin the work. And I must know—from personal observation, not reading, the shapes of windows, the nature of doorknobs, the aspects of kitchens. . . . I shall never use any of these things in the book. But unless I know what sort of doorknob his fingers closed on how shall I—satisfactorily to myself—get my character out of doors?" That quotation, to a young writer, should be worth the price of the book.

But most American readers will take *It Was the Nightingale* to their hearts because of the warm and generous estimation of American authors. It is no mere lip service that he is giving when he records his impression that "The Middle West was seething with literary impetus." Once he saw what manuscripts young American writers were sending to Paris there was no sacrifice too great for him to make if only they might have their hearing. "It is true", he goes on to say in the same passage, "that a great proportion of them were obviously autobiographical in conception and all of them local in scene. But a just perception of one's surroundings and of one's own career form the first step towards a literature that shall be great in scope. Local literatures are as a rule a nuisance. . . . But a wave of literature that in a few years produced—to mention them without appraisal and at random—Mr. Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, Mr. McAlmon's photographic reports on Berlin night life; Mr. Nathan Ash's *Love in Chartres*; Miss Katherine Anne Porter's Mexican stories side by side with Glenway Wescott's *The Grandmothers*; Mr. Davis's *The Opening of a Door*; Miss Elizabeth Madox Roberts's *My Heart and My Flesh* and Miss Caroline

Gordon's *Penhally*—such a wave of literature cannot, whatever else be said of it, be called parochial."

There is a great deal more of this generous estimation of Americans in the book. If only it were possible to see eye to eye with Mr. Ford here! Some of those he mentions by name are worthy of the warmest praise he can bestow, but he goes on to see in America today the land of literary promise. A weekend with some of our most earnestly acclaimed American artists, whose books of short stories appeared simultaneously with *It Was the Nightingale*—and Mr. Ford is an ardent protagonist of the American short story—only increases one's wistfulness. Here are Erskine Caldwell's *We Are the Living*; José Garcia Villa's *Footnote to Youth*; Ernest Hemingway's *Winner Take Nothing*; and *A "Story" Anthology*, edited by Whit Burnett and Martha Foley, the editors of "*Story*".*

As the jackets and prefaces to these books emphasize, all these authors are "honest". If the reader looks, beyond that virtue which might fairly enough be taken for granted, for some hint that the author either has a philosophy of his own or has absorbed one from his environment that is mature enough to serve as the background for his observations, he will be disappointed. In these writers he will find irony, of the newspaper copy-room variety, that stunted irony of the eternal adolescent. If he hopes to find selection of material in the sense that such themes will be chosen as are at once compatible with reticence and yet of deep human significance, again he will be thwarted: the selection met here proceeds on opposite principles. Humour he will find, indeed; seldom better than in Mr. Hemingway's report of the nun, in *The Gangster, The Nun and the Radio*, who couldn't trust herself near the radio when Notre Dame was to play football:

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* WE ARE THE LIVING *by Erskine Caldwell* (VIKING. 264 pp. $2.00).

FOOTNOTE TO YOUTH *by José Garcia Villa* (SCRIBNERS. 323 pp. $2.50).

WINNER TAKE NOTHING *by Ernest Hemingway* (SCRIBNERS. 244 pp. $2.00).

A "STORY" ANTHOLOGY 1931-1933 *edited by Whit Burnett and Martha Foley* (VANGUARD. 346 pp. $2.50).

> Oh, no. I couldn't do it. The world series nearly finished me. When the Athletics were at bat I was praying right out loud: "Oh, Lord, direct their batting eyes! Oh, Lord, may he hit one! Oh, Lord, may he hit safely!" Then when they filled the bases in the third game, you remember, it was too much for me. "Oh, Lord, may he hit it out of the lot! Oh, Lord, may he drive it clean over the fence!" Then you know when the Cardinals would come to bat it was simply dreadful. "Oh, Lord, may they not see it! Oh, Lord, don't let them even catch a glimpse of it! Oh, Lord, may they fan!" And this game is even worse. It's Notre Dame. Our Lady. No, I'll be in the chapel. For Our Lady. . . .

And Mr. Caldwell, when he is being "gusty" instead of merely bawdy, can be very funny too. *Country Full of Swedes* keeps at it too long, but on a good level. However, there are times when Mr. Caldwell is not being intentionally humorous, and we get such stories as that of poor Rachel who died of the rat poison her young lover had put in his garbage-can before going to meet her (for she was the Scavenger's Daughter, and more beautiful than the day); and there is a gem of dressy writing which begins: "The first time I saw her was something more than a year after they became married." (Memory flies back to that first lover of Miss Loos's Lorelei Lee, who "became shot".)

On the whole the writers in *A "Story" Anthology* come out best, perhaps because they are allowed only one story apiece, so that the cumulative weight of their more nonsensical tricks cannot pile up against them. And, once you have steeled yourself to believe that venereal disease, abortion, every kind of pathological crisis and perversion are the material of high art, you may find here and there, even in stories which turn on these matters, promise of maturer work to come. Naomi Shumway's *Ike and Us Moons* shows the real gift, as does also *A Short Walk*, by Leane Zugsmith. I. V. Morris's *Old Age* is worth six of—but it will not do to be more explicit in invidious comparisons.

There is little to say of *Footnote to Youth.* A boyishly thin and somewhat exotic talent is already being asked to bear more laurels than it can sustain. Mr. Villa's greatest contribution to our short story is a typographical one: a trilogy of stories is written in short sections of a dozen lines or less, each section bearing its own serial number. This author is even more repetitive than Mr. Hemingway and Mr. Caldwell, and his simpler characters repeat each sentence which they manage to achieve from one to six times. But Mr. Edward J. O'Brien has, in any case, run off with the honours of critical comment: "The asceticism of the Spanish short story added to the severity of the desert and the stripped dry quality of Mexican life are joined in Mr. Villa's stories to a native sensuousness of perception and expression."

The truth is—to return to *It Was the Nightingale*—that Mr. Ford is an artist; and that here and there we have an artist, and that there is no one quicker to recognize artistry than Mr. Ford. But he would do American literature—and all literature—a greater service if he would stress for us those traditions which even the most rebellious Englishman has as his birthright: a sound education and discipline in restraint. If we continue to ignore the necessity for such a background, our artists will grow fewer and feebler and at last they will die from our scene.

DOROTHEA BRANDE

Tradition Versus Revolution

AMONG our younger literary critics there was one, a few years ago, who was worth watching: Granville Hicks, sensitive, thoughtful, capable of developing in various directions. He has now chosen his direction. He has done more, he has chosen his position, which is that of prophet of a proletarian literature. In another five years he may have a new plan; an ardent young revolutionist today, he may become a sober traditionalist tomorrow. For he is plainly attracted by the idea of tradition as well as the idea of revolution, attempting to satisfy both sides of his nature by accepting what he terms "the revolutionary tradition", "the tradition of John Reed". When this tradition seems a bit recent and thin, he points abroad to Karl Marx, or, at home, to Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Howells, and Jack London, heralds of the Foster and Ford Committee to which Mr. Hicks belonged. "This", he says, "is the great tradition of American literature."

The first chapter of the book,* "Heritage", estimates the writers of the Golden Day in terms of Communism. Longfellow is easily brushed aside; Lowell comes in for a great scolding; Whitman is warmly annexed though with reservations. Then we march through Mark Twain, Howells, James, Emily Dickinson, Henry Adams, Bellamy, Crane, Norris, London, and Sinclair and the other writers of the middle generation, all of them more or less warped by the prevailing capitalist psychology. And so we arrive at the younger generation–Krutch, Jeffers, Faulkner, Eliot, Wilder, Hemingway, Dos Passos, et cetera–most of whom are still following wrong traditions. But he finds, quite rightly, that a Communist bandwagon is taking more and more authors and critics for a ride, and he looks forward with courage and hope to the eventual fulfilment of the Great American Dream. The quality of his evaluations may be illustrated by his declaration that in her later books Willa Cather "could do nothing but paint pretty pictures" coloured with "religiosity", while the talent of Sherwood Anderson in his best work is "of the first order" and "In John Dos Passos and in his liked-minded colleagues we find the modern expression of the spirit that moves in the noblest creations of the past". What Mr. Hicks will value in the next five years is indicated by this: "There is new territory that we beg the poet to conquer for us"–"mechanics, shop-girls, truck-drivers". The writer of the future, if he is to achieve anything important, "must ally himself with the working class" and no other class, must accept the gospel according to Karl Marx, must assist in bringing on the day when "the exploited overthrow the exploiters". "Whatever destruction the future may bring", such a writer will lend his force to the cause that is destined to win.

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* THE GREAT TRADITION: AN INTERPRETATION OF AMERICAN LITERATURE SINCE THE CIVIL WAR *by Granville Hicks* (MACMILLAN. 317 pp. $2.50)

Revolutionists who look forward cheerfully to violence and destruction are not likely to be generous to their opponents, and Mr. Hicks is far from generous. If you do not agree with him, if you prefer the existing order, however badly it needs reformation, to the promise of a proletarian dictatorship, you are labelled an "apologist" and told that you will inevitably go in for "dishonesty and misrepresentation". You will be accused, whatever you say or do, of "evasion". You will be convicted, at the least, of prejudice, bourgeois prejudice—there is, apparently, no proletarian prejudice. You will be revealed in the act of defending your property or income when you think you are expressing sound ideas concerning the nature of man and of social life. You will not only be suspected, which is legitimate; you will be condemned in advance, which is indecent.

As for the present reviewer, a supporter of critical humanism—his position is quite impossible, since Mr. Hicks announces (without arguing the matter) that humanism has no basis in anthropology or psychology or "science" or ethics, that in practice it is "a defense of private property, the existing order, and Puritan morality", and that it is meaningless when separated from "the sanctions of religious authority" (which are the bunk). Nevertheless, Mr. Hicks does say one handsome thing: he concedes that critical humanists have "occupied themselves with fundamental problems". I regret that I cannot return the compliment. I cannot but feel a constant sense of unreality as I read the pages of Mr. Hicks or any of the proletarian revolutionists. I feel, as Mr. Hicks feels when reading W. D. Howells, that "he is either asking the wrong questions or giving the wrong answers". The answers, to be sure, are not so bad, once you grant the assumptions that are nowhere stated, but the questions are, as it seems to me, irrelevant. Mr. Hicks says another thing about Howells that might be applied to himself, that he was "a product of his age and subject to the confusions of that age". Disregarding "pre-industrial traditions", our ardent young revolutionists are too intent upon the immediate problem, which they pose as that of collectivism *v.* individualism; they are like pedestrians so close to sign-board advertisements that they cannot read them. The fundamental problem, as the humanist conceives it, is that of naturalism *v.* humanism and religion; or, to meet the revolutionists halfway, a naturalistic collectivism *v.* a humanistic or religious individualism. Mr. Hicks gives no signs of having gone into this fundamental problem. When discussing religion, for example, he is simply cheap, ridiculing Anglicans for having "a realm of values outside the comprehension of the average American business man" (as well as the proletarian revolutionist), and Thornton Wilder for not showing "how providence functions in a steel strike or what grace means to the unemployed". I question whether he has pondered, or even read, the remarkable Encyclical of Pius XI on the reconstruction of the social order. I am not a Catholic, but I can at least perceive that this document comes to grips with the fundamental problems of modern civilization. If it were permissible to name anything antedating the tradition of John Reed, I think I would especially commend the *Politics* of Aristotle to Messrs. Hicks, Dos Passos, and their colleagues—above all the recognition, in that work, that what Mr. Hicks calls "the sources of the evils" are in human nature more than in social mechanisms.

NORMAN FOERSTER

An Artist on the Problems of Aesthetics

ERIC GILL has long had a considerable reputation in England as a sculptor of great talent, as an artist of high sensitiveness, and as a writer of force and ability. His work is far too little known in America. Except for some of his type designs and book illustrations, we have had little occasion to hear about him: after all it is a very limited public which can afford to buy *de luxe* editions or is interested in a designer of distinguished type faces. If there is one field of art in which he excels it is in letter-design. It might indeed be said that he and Rudolf Koch are the only living masters of that most abstract of all the arts, an art which requires a rarer genius, perhaps, merely because its conventions are so exigent. To have designed an essentially new style of letter which can gain wide and permanent public acceptance is an achievement so rare in the history of printing that only a bare handful of men can truly be said to have accomplished it. We cannot, today, tell whether this achievement is Gill's; but we can say that he comes as close to it as anyone of our generation.

There is a certain devotion to pure form, yet to form restrained and given meaning by that most rigid of requirements, legibility, which distinguishes a fine designer of letters. This quality is, or should be, closely akin to that required for philosophical studies: a devotion to the abstract (form), but a devotion ever restrained by the data of life and of the universe (are these not, in a sense, "cosmic legibility"?). Hence it is not surprising to find a fine and sensitive maker of letters to be likewise a fine philosopher, particularly if he is gifted with a mastery of language. Eric Gill is very far from being an inarticulate artist. He can express himself with vigour and grace. And there is in his writing that devotion to clarity, to simplicity, to generalization within the bounds of truth which is the hall-mark of genuine (as distinguished from academic) philosophy.

Naturally Gill's principal interest is in art and in the relation of art to society. Nearly everything he has written has been on this subject, and the present volume* is merely an expansion and repetition in new form of what he has often said before in *Art Nonsense*, in *Typography*, or in any of the many articles he has contributed to British periodicals. His main thesis is very simple, so simple that it is hardly fair to strip it to a brief summary. For it is one of those simple theses which cut straight to the heart of the matter and thus upset completely those aesthetic ideas on which we heirs of humanitarian and liberal muddle-headedness have been brought up. A reviewer may summarize the underlying principles; a reader may read them. But their mere statement cannot begin to convey their implications or their truthfulness. For that one must go to Gill himself.

*BEAUTY LOOKS AFTER HERSELF *by Eric Gill* (SHEED & WARD. 253 pp. $2.00)

Perhaps some idea of the aesthetics set forth in *Beauty Looks after Herself* may be gained from a few quotations. In defining the artist, Gill says:

> . . . I say the artist is simply the responsible workman; the art critics hail him as the irresponsible entertainer. I say he is a workman because his job is "the well making of what needs making"; they say he is an entertainer because Industrialism has released him from the necessity of making anything useful. I say he is responsible because, unlike a factory "hand", he uses his own powers of deliberation and choice; they say he is irresponsible because his works express nothing but his own fancies.

In another place he says:

> Art is deliberate skill—skill with mind behind it.

Opposed to art, in a sense, is "prudence":

> Prudence is the means to happiness in oneself.
> Art is the means to pleasure in what is not oneself. . . .
> Great intelligence is not necessary for prudence (happiness).
> Great prudence is not necessary for intelligence (pleasure).
> A fool may be a saint.
> A villain may be an artist.
> A fool may be a villain.
> A saint may be an artist.
> But a fool cannot be an artist, nor a villain a saint. . . .
>
> Art improves on Nature.
> That is what it is for.
> Beauty is the splendour of Being.
> The beautiful thing is that which being seen pleases.
> The beautiful is therefore the object of art, for only beautiful things give pleasure to the mind, and the pleasure of the mind is the object of art.

These few quotations give the basis on which Eric Gill constructs what he himself calls a "grammar of practical aesthetics". It is easy to recognize in them the influence of the thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas (Gill is a convert to Catholicism), of Belloc and Chesterton (his close personal friends). But to mention a few sources does not tell the whole story of a philosophy. It is the implications, the development of its thought, which makes a philosophy significant. To discuss all the ramifications of Gill's aesthetic is not within the scope of this review. It leads him, for instance, to a wholehearted support of what we would loosely call "modern" architecture as being the only honest solution of the architectural problems of our industrial age—an architecture which Gill himself far more appropriately calls "plain architecture". And this in spite of Gill's feeling that only the product of responsible human workmanship—handworkmanship—deserves to be considered the finest art. Of course these two points of view are thoroughly compatible; indeed they are mutually necessary, since "the factory system and the development of the division and subdivision of labour" has produced "the degradation of the majority of workmen to a condition of subhuman intellectual irresponsibility". But it requires the keen devotion to logic of a designer of letter-forms to expound the matter convincingly.

One can only recommend to anyone interested in aesthetics and the problem of the artist in modern society that he read Gill; *Beauty Looks after Herself* will serve admirably as a starter. It is of course easy to disagree with much that Gill says, but at least the reader will have discovered a point of view far removed from the subjective and sentimental relativism which has so obscured discussions of the subject for the last hundred years.

A word remains to be said about the unusual form in which several essays in this volume are presented. Some of the quotations given above hint of it, and must seem merely odd when presented in the midst of the usual prose construction. The form might be defined as a device of presentation in which each main thought is expressed in the simplest possible sentence —or pair of antithetical sentences—each indented, like a paragraph in normal prose. Subsidiary ideas are given double indention. The whole, at first glance, looks a little like *vers libre*. But the effect in reading is to build up a logical structure and to make possible without monotony an amount of useful repetition which would be out of the question in ordinary prose paragraphs. Here is a device for expository writing which needs exploration, for it has the added advantage of injecting, through its psalmodic antitheses and repetitions, a quality of feeling and conviction which is almost completely lacking in most modern philosophic prose.

Much the same device was used by Charles Péguy a quarter of a century ago, and used with consummate skill. It is interesting, incidentally, to see the same method being used in America by a writer of real vigour not yet "discovered" by the literati, Peter Maurin, whose contributions to the *Catholic Worker* have been one of that paper's most interesting features. To the technique of Péguy Gill has added a variation of the almost geometrical construction one finds in Saint Thomas, and in doing so he has made a genuine contribution to the technique of English letters. This point is, of course, subsidiary to the value of his provocative discussion of the problems of aesthetics.

HARRY LORIN BINSSE

Seventy-five Years of Religious Thought

THESE two books differ widely in scope and technique. In purpose and in method, the English book* is severely philosophical. The American book,** written with a lighter touch, concerns itself with the social phenomena of the various forms of what our American vocabulary knows as religionism.

Professor Webb's reputation as a writer on the philosophy of religion will ensure for his latest work the attention of all serious students of the subject. His theme is the English intellectual attitude toward religion, as that attitude is seen from the viewpoint of the Oxford thinkers of the latter half of the nineteenth century. The period to which he confines his study is fixed by two dates, 1850 and 1914, the first a date when the Tractarian Movement had already spent its first force and the second a date when an era of human history came to an end.

According to the Webb analysis of the state of philosophico-theological thought in England of the 1850's, four outstanding postulates were generally accepted: the transcendence of God, the creation of the world substantially in its present form, the author-

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*A STUDY OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT IN ENGLAND FROM 1850 *by Clement C. J. Webb* (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS. 189 pp. $2.50)

**THE MARCH OF FAITH: The Story of Religion in America since 1865 *by Winfred Ernest Garrison* (HARPER'S. 308 pp. $2.50) ity of the Bible as an historical record, and the natural immortality of the individual human soul. In parenthesis it may be noted that these fundamental assumptions are part and parcel of the nineteenth century's heritage from the scholastic Aristotelianism of the mediaeval period of Christian thought.

But the late sixties of the century saw them rudely challenged. The impact of the scientific dogma of natural evolution, the inundation of English thought by the torrent of German idealistic philosophy, the development of the historic sense, all these are listed by Professor Webb as the immediate causes of a definite movement away from the tradition of a transcendent God towards the notion of an immanent Divine Power. So rapidly did the movement grow that it may almost be described as a revolution in the thought-forms of English intellectuals. Men welcomed the notion of a Divine Energy moulding, as it were, from within, the social history of mankind as well as the destinies of individual units of the human race. It was as if the ghost of Plato had risen from the tomb and walked the ways of thinking men.

With a wealth of illustration drawn from the poets and novelists as well as from the philosophers, Webb elaborates his argument. Covering, in briefer compass, much the same ground as did Professor Muirhead in his study of the Platonic tradition, he restricts his attention to a discussion of the religious problem. He is not merely content with a record of events in the world of English religious thought; he is much more interested in the analysis of their philosophical causes. It would not be enough to say that he traces the graph of the development of the philosophy of immanentism; rather, he builds a house, taking stone by stone to show how the edifice grew till that disastrous year of 1914. What he has to say about the World War may be summed up in his own words:

> The War dealt a mortal blow to the optimistic religious immanentism which boasted itself to be able to discover within the actual system of civilization the spiritual values sought by earlier generations either in another world altogether or in a system which, though manifested in this world, originated in an intervention from without by the powers of another world in the affairs of this.

Yet he does not regard the cause of immanentism as utterly lost. He sees hope even in the present situation which, he tells us,

> is marked by a revolt against the immanentism of yesterday and demands from the theologians of tomorrow such a full consideration of the contrasted claims of *transcendence* and *immanence* to colour our thought of God as may lead to a revised view of the mutual relations of religion and civilization. For it is difficult to be satisfied either with the older Christian tradition which opposed them the one to the other or with the immanentism which since the period of the Renaissance has been continually moving towards the position expressed in a saying of Turgenieff: 'I believe in civilization and I require no further creed'.

Every earnest man must sympathize with this desire to retain whatsoever is good or helpful in the doctrines of immanentism. Perhaps some of the difficulty might be removed if due attention were given to the scholastic distinction between absolute immanence and relative immanence. The modern scholastic rejects absolute immanence because he revolts from the monism which it preaches; he sees it as a philosophy which sets aside the idea of separateness between God and the world and which destroys entirely every distinction between the natural and the supernatural order. But he accepts a relative immanence which safeguards the notion of the existence of a transcendent God. He is willing to concede and even to welcome the teaching of an immanent energy in individuals whereby we acquire the first principles of reason and the universal precepts of the moral consciousness. As an authority for this teaching he appeals to Aquinas most of all, but he knows equally well that he might also cite in his favour the names of Aristotle, the Alexandrine Fathers, and Augustine; even in the pages of Plato himself he might find justification for his view. One point the scholastic will not and can not yield, namely the thought of the Divine transcendence. An instance at hand is Professor Webb's enthusiastic tribute to the late Baron von Hügel, who, he tells us, "was profoundly convinced that religion could not dispense with faith in a transcendent object of worship, whose prevenient operation must be acknowledged if the religious life was to be understood or indeed carried on to any purpose".

Since our author is at great pains to express his admiration for Von Hügel, it may not be amiss to place on record a clear statement of the Baron's estimate of the value of a philosophy of Divine transcendence; the great modern mystic, whom Webb here calls a religious genius, once wrote to his niece as follows:

The central fact of religion is not survival but God. I am almost not interested in survival unless it means God. Survival must mean God or it means nothing. There are people who try to prove God only as a means to immortality; they have got it all upside down. How secondary is immortality to God! Look at the Psalmists; they hardly believed in immortality; they did not think about it; yet theirs is the deepest expression we know of love of God, of sanctity, of holiness, of joy.

What Farrar called the larger hope is here ruthlessly struck down in favour of something higher. No wonder that Webb lays stress on the fact that Von Hügel was ever a severe critic of immanentism and eventually its declared opponent. Yet despite this opposition to the prevailing philosophy, or perhaps because of it, Friedrich von Hügel came in the end to exert, we are told, a remarkable influence upon thoughtful and religious minds in Great Britain.

As for the second book on our list, covering roughly the same period in America, its interest is factual rather than philosophical. Its author has chosen the period since 1865 as a field for his study because the churches as well as the nation took a fresh start after the Civil War. Since that date the West has been opened, a process of urbanization has been going on all through the country, the social conscience of the churches has been quickened, there is a new attitude toward denominational divisions, a new sensitiveness of the churches to their international responsibilities and a deeper concern with moral, social, and economic problems; all of which, the author feels, is his justification for entering upon the study of the various manifestations of church activity in the affairs of the people of this country.

What each of these books proves is that, at the moment, the religious instinct of modern man is far from a state of atrophy. Indeed it would almost seem as if this modern generation of ours hungers and thirsts for religious truth and for a spiritual interpretation of life with an impatience that will brook no denial. One may well ask why this hunger and thirst are not being satisfied. Let Professor Webb offer an answer:

> The true enemy of religion in the modern world is not philosophy or science; it is the purely secular habit of mind engendered in the hurrying life of great cities. To this secular habit of mind it is possible that Christianity alone of the historical religions can hope to offer an effectual resistance.

The answer is scarcely conclusive. There was a purely secular habit of mind long before the era of big cities. That secular habit of mind has been called by other names. Once it was spoken of as a hankering for the fleshpots of Egypt, and once it was politely referred to as a desire for the loaves and fishes. Professor Webb's forerunners at Oxford would undoubtedly have called it original sin.

CHAS. F. RONAYNE

EDITORIAL NOTES

Belloc and the Distributists

As was announced in the first issue of The American Review, one of the chief purposes of the magazine is to make better known the economic views of the English group who call themselves Distributists, led by Hilaire Belloc and G. K. Chesterton. The conclusion with this issue of Mr. Belloc's series of articles on *The Restoration of Property* provides an occasion to draw attention to the books and periodicals where the work of the Distributists may be studied. To judge from the letters received, a good many readers will be glad to avail themselves of a guide to further reading in the literature of the group. This note does not attempt to outline the Distributist theories but only to indicate the sources.

Mr. Belloc's articles, *The Restoration of Property*, are but the last of a long series of similar analyses which he has published during the past thirty years. His earlier articles on economic matters have unfortunately never been published in book form; for all of his seventy or eighty published volumes, much of his work lies buried in magazine files. It was in the days when the Fabian Society was in the ascendant that Belloc entered the lists of economic disputation. It was when Shaw was saying complacently, "Of course, we are all Socialists now", and even H. G. Wells came down to earth from his gaudy visions of the Great Rosy Dawn (the phrase is Belloc's) to take part in the councils of the Fabian Society—to the personal discomfiture of everybody concerned.

Shaw meant that nobody of brains was defending capitalism, and that liberals and conservatives alike were stealing planks from the socialist platform. But he should have said that *nearly* everybody was a socialist now. For two men stood against the current. Two men whose literary and intellectual gifts placed them in the front rank of English writers. Into the economic controversies of the first decade of this century, with their almost universal acceptance of the socialist cure for capitalism, Belloc and Chesterton suddenly appeared sounding a fresh and jarring note. They were just as strongly opposed to capitalism as any socialist, just as convinced that it was doomed to disappear, and the sooner the better; but they pronounced the socialist cure less desirable than another. They said, further, that the socialist cure was not only less desirable but was extremely likely to turn into something very different from its intention. And they were able to show easily that their own proposal had worked; that socialism or collectivism had never existed; and that what would come from the attempts to create socialism was an age-old form of economy which ever loomed when a society had lost one quality—a taste for freedom.

If one may simplify their position unduly, for the sake of indicating the contents of their relevant books, they defined capitalism as the ownership of property —the means of production—by a few, accompanied by political freedom for the majority. They showed—and in this of course they joined the socialists—that such a state contained elements of instability which doomed it to a short life. They further pointed out that this condition had three remedies, and only three: "To solve capitalism you must get rid of restricted ownership, or of freedom, or of both." Getting rid of "both" was collectivism, in which all the means of production are put in the hands of the political officers of the community, to be held in trust for the advantage of all. Getting rid of freedom meant, in a phrase, returning to the servile state: confirming owners in their property while at the same time giving security to the proletariat by having them exchange their freedom for *status*: for fixed rights in return for compulsory labour.

Both of these cures Belloc and Chesterton rejected. They thought them both undesirable, and the second —the completely collectivist, or communist state—they thought also unattainable and extremely likely to turn out in practice to be the ancient servile or slave state from which our civilization sprang. Their own choice was the first of the three possible cures—"getting rid of restricted ownership", which meant spreading ownership in the means of production so widely that ownership and the resulting freedom become the dominant note in society instead of a rare and special privilege: they urged the Distributist or Proprietary State.

These views—not stated thus baldly, but expounded with masterly analysis and rhetoric—sounded strange to the Fabians of the early 1900's, as you will find if you go to the files of A. R. Orage's *New Age*, where some of the earliest Distributist polemics took place. Shaw rushed out to slay this strange monster which he named the Chesterbelloc. Wells wrote a stupid retort and even included it later in a book. Such a cavalier dismissal of the dreams of the socialists was not comfortable: these men must be shown for tools of the capitalists, dangerous reactionaries, sentimental mediaevalists, ignorant fools, and similar objectionable things. The reception of the Distributists has been much the same ever since. Their views still sound strange, and still rouse the familiar epithets. But this reaction has increasingly become, when it is not mere journalistic habit, coloured by the recognition of a solid adversary, a genuine alternative to the Marxian panacea which waxed so strong in the nineteenth century and the early years of this. With the end of capitalism brought near by the War and its aftermath, and with Marxian communism permanently checkmated by the rise of fascism, men's minds have become, for the first time since the beginnings of capitalism in the sixteenth century, capable of taking a balanced view of the economic predicament in which we find ourselves, capable of searching for a solution based on sound history and sound moral analysis. It is this change in atmosphere—a veritable shaking of the intellectual kaleidoscope—that is resulting in an increasing number turning to the work of Belloc and Chesterton.

Although it was presumably Belloc who first clearly formulated the Distributist position—he has, as Hoffman Nickerson puts it, a "primary mind", and here as elsewhere Chesterton has followed more than he has led—it was Chesterton who produced the first book in the Distributist corpus. *What's Wrong with the World*, published in 1910, is not exactly a book on economics: it is rather a prelude to a sane economics. Shifting from the literary, psychological, and theological emphasis of the books with which he had made his first fame, *Heretics* and *Orthodoxy*, Chesterton launched a polemic against the whole tone of Victorian and post-Victorian society in handling social relations. The book deals more with "tone" and "atmosphere" and emotional habits than it does with particular problems and solutions. But many have found it an invaluable introduction to the more concrete later work: it provides the emotional catharsis which most of us need before we can begin to make our way out of the prevailing fog. The book contains, by the way, some of the most moving rhetoric Chesterton has ever attained.

Belloc, meanwhile, was serving his period in Parliament (1906-1910), with time for little but essays and articles. But in 1912 he published the book which is the central Distributist document: *The Servile State.* It is no exaggeration to say that this is one of the most powerful tracts ever written. The full weight of Belloc's gift as an historian, a social observer, a moralist, and a writer of limpid prose are present in its one hundred and seventy brief pages. It traces the growth of Western economics from slavery through capitalism and poses the alternatives of a return to slavery or a return to freedom through property.

The period of the War pushed both men into other fields, though Distributism was not absent from their magazine *The New Witness* (at first called *The Eye Witness*). The next contribution in book form was Belloc's little work called *Economics for Helen*: which the American publishers decided ought to be called *Economics for Young People.* This is a complete elementary treatise on economics, in which the

Distributist doctrines are placed in the perspective of the whole science as they had been placed in the perspective of history by *The Servile State.*

In 1927 Chesterton published *The Outline of Sanity*, which is his major contribution to economic discussion. It consists of a series of articles from his magazine *G. K.'s Weekly*, founded in 1923 to succeed *The New Witness.* Chesterton's special gift of clothing solid doctrine in the shining raiment of his rhetoric has never appeared to better advantage than here. Although its fame has been less, it stands apart from the bulk of his work with those more solid and enduring volumes in which his claim on the future is most indelibly recorded: *The Everlasting Man* and *Orthodoxy.* In the previous year he had published a life of William Cobbett which should also be included among the source-books of Distributism. Of all the English writers—not excepting Dickens—it is probably Cobbett with whom Chesterton has the closest affinity: Cobbett who saw to the heart of capitalist industrialism as it swept over the English countryside in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and fought it with flaming language.

This account of the five books in which the Distributist doctrines are most fully conveyed needs to be supplemented by a special reference to *G. K.'s Weekly*, which is without doubt the most useful weekly published in English. Besides the regular articles from the editor and frequent contributions from Belloc, a corps of brilliant assistants provides an acute commentary on current affairs, enlivened by choice satire. Another magazine, *The Distributist*, is the organ of the Distributist League, which maintains centres in the leading cities of Great Britain. The files of these magazines, and of the earlier *New Witness*, contain an abundance of material which has never been reprinted. Particularly valuable was a series by Belloc around 1922 containing concrete proposals for the attaining of the Distributist State. It was similar to the articles just concluded in THE AMERICAN REVIEW, but with additional points. It is to be hoped that he will crown his contribution to economic thought by assembling the two series into a single volume.

And finally, mention should be made of some books by Belloc which are closely related to his economics but deal more explicitly with political problems: they are the books which entitle him to be called the ablest political thinker of our day. First and foremost, *The House of Commons and Monarchy* (1920), in which the case for monarchy is irresistibly stated and a fundamental analysis given to the conceptions of aristocracy and political democracy. An earlier work, *The Party System* (1911), written with Cecil Chesterton, was the fruit of his taste of Parliament. Two studies of special political problems, *The Free Press* (1917) and *The Jews* (1922) are the major works on their subjects. His book on this country, *The Contrast* (1923), includes valuable observations on American politics. *The Cruise of the Nona* (1925) purports to record a yachting cruise, but it is full of the ripest products of Belloc's reflection on a wide variety of subjects, against a background of the same literary charm that made *The Road to Rome* a masterpiece.

S. C.